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SEA SERMONS:

OR, A

SERIES OF DISCOURSES

FOR THE USE OF THE

ROYAL NAVY.

By the REV. JAMES RAMSAY.

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LONDON:

Printed by JOHN RIVINGTON, Junior;
For JOHN, FRANCIS, and CHARLES RIVINGTON,
No 62. St. PAUL's Church-Yard. 1781.

To His Royal Highness

PRINCE WILLIAM HENRY

THE RISING ORNAMENT OF THE

BRITISH NAVY

THESE

SERMONS

INTENDED TO DIFFUSE THROUGHOUT THAT

NAVY

A SPIRIT OF PIETY, BROTHERLY AFFECTION, UNANIMITY, TEMPERANCE, TRUE CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE, AND ARDENT ZEAL FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE,

ARE WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT AND HUMILITY INSCRIBED BY

His ROYAL HIGHNESS's

MOST OBEDIENT

AND MOST DEVOTED SERVANT,

The AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Sermons were drawn up for the uſe of his Majeſty's Ship Prince of Wales. They were far advanced in the compoſition, and had received the approbation of ſeveral Officers of rank, before the Author thought of giving them to the public: they were undertaken, becauſe he found common diſcourſes not fitted for the circumſtances of a ſhip of war.

If it be ſaid, as probably it may be ſaid, that ſeamen are not objects of moral or religious inſtruction, the Author denies the aſſertion. The people for whom theſe diſcourſes were written, and among whom they were ſuppoſed to have had ſome effect, were as orderly a ſet of men, as could probably be found together in any corner of the ſtate: yet they were collected, as ſhips companies generally are collected, from all parts, and out of all trades and employments. The Admiral promoted decency, and a reſpect for religion. The Captain and Officers were men of experience and good ſenſe. The example ſpread throughout, and gave

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the whole a ſober, regular appearance.

That this ſober turn did not injure them in their courage and reſolution, (qualities, which I know not for what reaſon, are ſuppoſed to be joined with a ferocious diſregard of every thing civil and ſacred) appeared plainly in their conduct, both active and paſſive, at St. Lucia, in their intrepidity at Grenada, and in the ſtill more trying circumſtances of their voyage from the Weſt Indies in October 1779. I fear the opinion takes its riſe from conſidering the whip as a ſhorter method of management than reaſon: yet no body of men is more capable of being led

by reaſon, or more ready to ſubmit to its dictates.

In offering theſe diſcourſes to the public, the Author gives them as they are, SEA SERMONS, adapted to the ſituation and circumſtances of ſeamen, not as finiſhed eſſays, or accurate diſcuſſions of particular points of doctrine, but as helps to reflection. Men are not ignorant, but careleſs of their duty. It is more neceſſary to give their thoughts a right turn, than to inform the underſtanding. The ſubject, as he has treated it, is new; but of the execution he muſt think diffidently, till the public has paſſed judgement on the work. Particular circumſtances, with which

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it is not neceſſary to trouble the public, have prevented the Author from giving it even that poliſh, which otherwiſe was in his power. It is not meant to confer reputation, or to bring profit, but to do good, and promote an infant, uſeful inſtitution. It has therefore, he hopes, ſome claim to be treated with candour and indulgence.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS TO THE SEAMEN SERVING IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

SIRS,

THE following diſcourſes were deſigned for your uſe, and were framed to take in your particular ſituation in the ſervice of your country. I hope it is not neceſſary to ſpend many words, to prove you to be objects of ſuch inſtruction, and capable of religious reflections. It is true, men, on all occaſions, are deſirous of ſhifting what they think burdens from themſelves, to fix them on their neighbours. And there are ſo many things peculiar, or, by time, become ſo habitual to your way of life, as among careleſs people, who look not at the reaſon of things

to make the pretence plauſible of your having a particular rule of conduct to walk by, or rather of ſuppoſing you not bound by the obligations which take place with regard to the actions of other men. Hence among you profane ſwearing is eſteemed a qualification, rather than a vice: hence the opinion that the laws of chaſtity and ſobriety do not reſpect you; that deſertion fixes no diſgrace on a ſeaman, and many ſuch like abſurdities.

Now, my brethren, if you would but reflect on the ignominy of ſuch ſuppoſitions, you would not countenance them when made by others for you, nor favour them in your own practice. To be without law or reſtraint is to be irrational or brutal. The more exalted any being is, the more ſtrictly that being is bound by laws. God himſelf preſcribes ſtricter rules for his own conduct, than he gives, or can poſſibly give to any, even the moſt exalted of his creatures. Among men, the

the life of a man of virtue, who has been liberally educated, is much more exact, is reſtrained within narrower rules, than that of men, who have not had his advantages.

This reſtraint muſt not be miſtaken for ſlavery. Slavery ſubjects one man to the blind, unforeſeen caprice of another. But law, which is derived from God, and is another name for the reaſon and the nature of things, directs a man how he may moſt eaſily attain the purpoſe of his being, happineſs in heaven; and therefore it will be compleat in proportion as it deſcends to minute diſtinctions, and comprehends more intimately the ſeveral relations of men and things.

When therefore you are conſidered as being looſed from obligations that bind other men, by that ſuppoſition you are degraded below the rank of other men. And does this ſuit your ambition? Can you, who are the inſtruments of your country's wealth, the guardians of her laws,

laws, the avengers of her wrongs, bear to be conſidered in ſuch an humiliating light, to be ſet below the loweſt of the helpleſs people, whom you protect, defend, and enrich?

And as doubtleſs you will conclude with me, that nothing in your ſtation debaſes you below the rank of other men, ſo there is nothing in your cuſtoms or way of life that ſhould produce the effect. Travelling is a great means of acquiring knowledge; but you are travellers by profeſſion. Your art draws its principles from the knowledge of nature, an acquaintance with aſtronomy, the winds, the ſeaſons, the produce of the various countries, the wonders of the deep, the peculiarities of climates and kingdoms. You cannot therefore plead ignorance; for by only keeping open your eyes and ears, you muſt draw in knowledge and information beyond the bulk of mankind. You want nothing but a little diſcreet reflection to ſet you above the

greater

greater part of your brethren in the ſcale of reaſon and improvement. To produce that is the deſign of the following diſcourſes.

And, my brethren, ought reflection to be wanting among you, whoſe way of life is one ſcene of ſilent attention and ſober obſervation? When that noble machine which you direct in your country's ſervice is once fitted by your induſtry, and put in motion by your ſkill, your employment becomes then confined to an obſervation of the heavens, and an attendance on their movements. This muſt naturally be accompanied with a reference to, and a dependence on that Being, in whoſe hands the winds and ſeaſons are, who alone can forward or protect you. And ſhall we, notwithſtanding, find a greater neglect of God, and a more univerſal profanation of his name among you than other men? For ſhame, brethren, this ought not ſo to be.

Again, the conducting of the ſhip, depends on the vigour and ſtrength which you are

able

able to exert in working her. But theſe are not to be acquired in the ways of drunkenneſs or debauchery, or to be preſerved in the arms of a ſtrumpet. Health and ſtrength are the property only of the chaſte and ſober. As you therefore value your profeſſion, you will guard againſt exceſs of every kind, and lead ſober regular lives.

You and your comrades, are brought together for one purpoſe of mutual aſſiſtance and exertion. Your ſucceſs depends on your joint efforts. Your brother's intereſt and welfare then become your's. You riſe and fall together. And here far be it from me to fix indiſcriminate cenſure. You are an open, free-hearted people, and only need to have your generoſity directed to its proper object. When therefore you indulge the natural benevolence of your hearts in doing good offices to your neighbour, conſider God as commanding the duty, and preſcribing his love to you as the meaſure of it.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, the purpoſe of your profeſſion is a public purpoſe: it is either to enrich, or to protect your country. *Hence the unlawfulneſs of mutiny, deſertion, drunkenneſs, and diſobedience of orders, as deſtructive of the very end of your profeſſion. Hence diligence, aſſiduity, ready obedience, and their foundation induſtry and ſobriety, become neceſſary qualifications in the public ſervice.*

My brethren, you ſee here, how your duty as men riſe out of, or is cloſely connected with the very principles of your profeſſion. You cannot offend God or profane his holy name, without breaking through that dependence, which your profeſſion has on his providence, and counteracting that contemplative, reflecting turn, which your employment naturally inſpires. You cannot hurt your conſtitution with bad women, or ſtrong drink, but you put it out of your power to fulfil the duties of your ſtation. When you injure your comrade you hurt yourſelves, and leſſen

your own ability of commanding ſucceſs. If you deſert, be mutinous, diſobedient, or ſottiſh, you abandon that duty to your country, which is the glory and credit of your profeſſion.

And hence you may learn, that, ſo far is your profeſſion from relaxing the terms of your duty, it gives on the contrary to every part new and powerful obligations. And when to theſe we add the general reaſons of man's duty, and conſider that it has God for its author, and heaven for its object; that it was important enough to bring down the Son of God from heaven, to renew the terms, and be an example of its perfection; is it unreaſonable to expect a particular attention to their duty, an extraordinary degree of ſeriouſneſs in men of your profeſſion.

You certainly are freed from many of the temptations to ſin which prevail among thoſe of your rank on ſhore. Your little intereſts are not oppoſed ſo as to introduce a mean, pitiful, fraudulent diſpoſition among you.

You

You have no occaſion to call to God to witneſs a lie, to over-reach your neighbour: for you are equally intereſted in your own, and his welfare. The very nature of your profeſſion favours habits of chaſtity, ſobriety, patience, forbearance, reſignation. Are not theſe reaſons to look for ſuperior degrees of virtue and goodneſs among you? And are there not in fact individuals of your acquaintance, who come up to every thing here expected from you?

Humility, as a Chriſtian virtue, is neceſſary to teach us our weakneſs, ſinfulneſs, and need of a Mediator with an holy God, and to check that overweening conceit, which is apt to breed contempt of our brother. But it ſuppoſes not that mean opinion of ourſelves, that ſeeks not after improvement, but is content to let paſſion rule, and lord it over reaſon. I would teach you to think more juſtly of yourſelves, and to aim at that progreſſive virtue and improvement, for which your profeſſion is par-

ticularly calculated, and which has that future eternal happineſs in view.

If the following Diſcourſes ſhall contribute thus to raiſe, and farther refine your opinion of yourſelves, to make you more uſeful to your fellow-citizen, and to look up for happineſs in heaven with more confidence in God's mercy through Chriſt than hitherto you have done; the author by indulging in the work his attachment to you, and to the ſervice, will have gained one great point of his ambition, the effecting of ſome laſting good to his brethren and to his country. And this reflection will enable him to combat the hardſhips, that a conſcientious diſcharge of his duty to his country makes him experience in paſſing through life.

St. Chriſtopher's,
July 25, 1780.

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SERMON I. *

DEUT. xxxii. 29, 30.

O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this. —How ſhould one chace a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight?

I WISH, brethren, to impreſs firmly on your minds this important truth, that all events, whether they be of a public or of a private nature, are produced by a wiſe, over-ruling providence, guiding every occurrence,

* This Sermon was preached on board his Majeſty's ſhip the Prince of Wales, on occaſion of the victory gained over the French fleet and army at St. Lucia, December 1778, and inſcribed to Admiral Barrington. It has been already printed.

and directing every agent, to the purpoſe of carrying on that benevolent plan, which has in view the good and happineſs of created beings. Indeed, after all the fine-drawn notions of infidelity, which celebrate the efficacy and perfection of nature's laws, in oppoſition to the ſuperintending energy of their Author, a glaring abſurdity, an univerſal confuſion, muſt follow the ſuppoſition, that God made this world, and then, if we may be allowed the expreſſion, toſſed it immediately from his hands, as if unworthy of his care.

Properly ſpeaking, a law is only a declaration of that line of conduct which the lawgiver intends to purſue, or expects the object of it to purſue, according to the particular circumſtances of the caſe. And it is plain that the ſame power which declared what this conduct ſhould be, muſt, when the proper occaſion happens, carry it alſo into execution. Thus a law which declares a puniſhment for murder, takes no effect in any particular inſtance mechanically, but by the deliberate interpoſition of magiſtrates acting under

under the ſame ſupreme power, by which the law was originally framed: nor, unleſs we aſcribe to the varying forms of matter, the intelligence and immutability of ſpirit, (attributes which neither reaſon nor obſervation warrants us to apply to the viſible things of creation) will all the general laws of nature, though ever ſo finely imagined, and accurately applied, account for the laſting conſiſtency of the material world, without firſt calling into their aid the directing hand of that Wiſdom which originally compacted the univerſe, and formed into order its various diſcordant parts.

Further, we find that the creatures of God's goodneſs are influenced in their feelings, and eſſentially affected in their enjoyments, by the behaviour of their fellows. And ſhall we ſuppoſe that He, who made them for happineſs, will ultimately ſuffer that happineſs to be deſtroyed, by the malice, ambition, or capricious conduct of others, equally his creatures? Were we to allow that injurious behaviour naturally rebounds in puniſhment

on the perpetrator's head, yet how ſhall we fancy that the ſame law, without a ſuperintending intelligence, can turn the injury and hurt that he has received, into a recompence to him, who has been the innocent object of them? Or will God, after having fitted all the parts of a glorious, and noble ſyſtem to each other, and to a purpoſe worthy of himſelf, be inattentive, whether it gains that purpoſe, or grow careleſs of conducting it to that end? This we cannot believe of him: he therefore cares for the world, for us in particular, and guides all our actions to his praiſe, and our own happineſs.

In dealing with his reaſonable creature man, God, by his interpoſing providence, hath intimately connected his happineſs with his obedience; or he obliges man to co-operate with his providence in bringing about his own happineſs. And as the happineſs appointed for man by God is of ſuch a nature as to conſiſt either in the exerciſe of virtue, and the benevolent affections, or ſuppoſeth ſuch a diſpoſition prevalent in the man,

who

who is intended to enjoy it; it evidently follows, that obedience and happineſs cannot poſſibly be ſeparated.

This connection between duty and happineſs appears in fact particularly evident in the hiſtory of God's dealing with his own people, the Jews. Moſes, in the text, ſpeaking of the foundation of public proſperity, cries out, "O that my people were wiſe, that they underſtood this!—How ſhould one chace a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight?" Or how ſhould the power and happineſs of my people be exalted, if they would follow virtue, and be obedient to God's laws? Accordingly, to ſerve God, and to proſper, were, among the Jews, equivalent terms, their ſtate riſing and falling among the nations, in proportion to the degree of their obedience, or diſobedience to the laws of God. But indeed, the hiſtory of every other kingdom confirms this important truth, "that righteouſneſs exalteth a nation, and that ſin is a reproach to any people." Bear, therefore, this truth conſtantly in your minds, (for I

addreſs you as compoſing a diſtinguiſhed rank in the ſtate) that to proſper, and be happy, you muſt be virtuous and good.

My brethren, the conſequence here mentioned as flowing from obedience, has in your perſons been realized to our country. Your commander, and your officers, have been the happy inſtruments, in the hands of Providence, of directing your courage to the gaining of as ſignal, and important a deliverance for our country, as hiſtory perhaps can equal. And the great difference in ſtrength, between you and our enemy, may well warrant the expreſſion in the text; "for one of you hath chaced a thouſand, and two have put ten thouſand to flight." It is my wiſh, that the unexpected iſſue of the conteſt may have a proper and a laſting effect on you; and therefore, I ſhall, in as few words as poſſible, conſider it in a light, in which, perhaps, your modeſty will hinder you from viewing it, but in which our grateful country muſt ever behold it; and taken

in

in which, it muſt produce the beſt conſequences, both in yourſelves, and every pious obſerver.

You, and your fellow-combatants employed on ſhore, were as a band of brothers engaged in one cauſe. And to your credit let it be obſerved, that this unanimity was highly promoted by your generouſly ſtepping forward, wherever you could aſſiſt, or relieve them. You without murmuring ſubmitted for weeks to a conſiderable diminution of your proper allowance of food, that they might not be in danger of being ſtinted in the moſt plentiful diſtribution of it. Though liable to be hourly attacked by a numerous enemy, and obliged, during the whole expedition, to be conſtantly on the watch, ſleeping only at your quarters, you cheerfully ſubmitted to a ſevere nightly fatigue, to carry on your own backs, for their uſe, through tedious and almoſt impaſſable roads, this unſtinted diſtribution of food, though threatening a demand on your own ſcanty ſtores.

This harmony, and on your ſide generous ſupport, which cannot be too ſtrongly recommended in every caſe, without which the beſt laid plans muſt fail in the execution, made you irreſiſtible together, and inſured your joint ſucceſs. In the arduous ſtruggle with the enemy you nobly ſupported the honour of your country's arms, and repelled a power more than ſufficient to have ſwallowed you up. Your hardy oppoſition not only ſaved from certain ruin your brethren in the war, but encouraged them with the promiſe of equal ſucceſs, when they themſelves were attacked. By your bold repulſe of the enemy you ſecured the ſafety of the ſquadrons that were coming to your aſſiſtance, and in the moment when your own ſafety was deſpaired of, when your enemy every hour threatened to overwhelm you, you wreſted from his hands an important colony. You prevented from falling into his power our valuable convoys, on the preſervation of which the very being of our colonies depends. You ſaved the colonies from an expedition fitted out, and ready to ſail againſt them, to which they could

could not have made the leaſt reſiſtance. In ſaving them you ſaved your country.

For, fancy that but a day had been loſt in forwarding your expedition; (and many ſpecious reaſons might have been given, by one leſs anxious than your leader to ſerve his country, many ſpecious reaſons might have been uſed by dilatory men, with one leſs poſitive in refuſing to lend an ear to procraſtinating counſels) ſuppoſe your bravery unſucceſsful; then figure this noble fleet, theſe gallant troops, our numerous convoys, our valuable colonies, their extenſive trade, the reſource of the navy deſtroyed, over-run, or in the enemies hands; this muſt have brought abſolute ruin along with it, and laid the glory of Britain in the duſt. God by your hands checked the impending levelling ſtorm, bidding you to be victorious, and your country to be ſafe.—Happy inſtruments of your country's good! What continual thanks ſhould you render to God, for having been thought worthy of working out this great deliverance? How ſhould the reflection ſooth you in every

various turn of life, to be able thankfully to ſay, "by theſe hands, God vouchſafed to ſave my country?" May that country never prove ungrateful to your merit! May you find in her boſom a comfortable retreat when the active period of life is over! May the generous return made to your merit kindle in the profeſſion an ardour for the ſervice of our country, to vindicate her rights to lateſt ages!

Pauſe here; obſerve yourſelves in this noble point of view; the bulwarks and defenders of your country. Giving firſt, as is moſt due, and your greateſt honour, the glory to God, as the Author of your ſucceſs; indulge the thought, dwell on the contemplation of your own importance. Your rivals, oppoſed to you, are the inſtruments of an ambitious tyrant; your deluded brethren, their aſſociates, in arms againſt you, are the tools of their boaſted ally, to rivet their own chains. You ſtand forward in your own cauſe, you ſhare in, you enjoy, your own ſucceſs. I wiſh you to think highly of yourſelves, to grow daily in

in your own eſteem. Why ſhould a profeſſion of your importance, why ſhould men capable of your exertions, ever be conſidered in a humiliating, or contemptuous light? It can never happen but through your own diffidence or fault. Imagine even the victory, which God hath granted to our country by your hands, to be, as the text hath promiſed, the fruit of your virtue, and obedience to God's laws. Not one diminiſhing reflection ſhall fall from my lips to check the ſwelling thought. I am ſure you have virtues that God values, and fails not to reward; a candour, and ſimplicity of manners; a brotherly attachment to each other; an hearty love for your country; and a reverence for God, and good things, perhaps hidden from your own knowledge.

I wiſh you to act up to this noble character: my preſent aim is to induce you to perſevere in demeaning yourſelves, as belonging to a profeſſion, valuable in itſelf, and on which God hath, in you, conferred the higheſt poſſible

ſible honour, the honour of protecting and ſaving your country.

This victory then, has been the reward of your courage, your ſobriety, and obedience to command. Now if you be thankful to God for the ſucceſs which has been beſtowed on theſe virtues, you will be careful to conduct yourſelves in like manner in time to come, that you may preſerve a character thus ſtampt with approbation from Heaven. Among men ſeparated by Heaven from amidſt their fellows, to be, at ſuch a criſis, the protectors, and deliverers of their country, we ſhall not find a perſon capable of neglect, of diſobedience of orders, of deſertion, of drunkenneſs, to the hindrance of the ſervice, nor of any immorality that reſpects the man. Did your officers overlook the commiſſion of ſuch faults, your own jealouſy of your credit, as a body, would, among yourſelves, correct the reproach. After having been thus honoured by God, you are obliged to perſevere in behaving as men worthy of his

his favour. And when you conſider, that the ſame conduct which becomes you as men, whom God hath favoured, is the beſt pledge of new favours and new bleſſings, you have an additional reaſon for being virtuous and good. By not diſgracing the mercies conferred upon you, you will induce God to continue his favour to you, and to bleſs our country by your hands. Who can tell, but that it may be reſerved for thoſe, who ſaved our country in the late extremity, to repeat the blow, and lay the inſidious enemy at her feet? Her cauſe is good; for never was a more unprovoked war on the ſide both of her revolted ſubjects, and treacherous rivals, who have joined in a conſpiracy againſt her grandeur and commerce. Ingratitude of the deepeſt dye in the one, unexampled perfidy in the other, are its leading features.

It therefore becomes you to keep yourſelves in a capacity of continuing to be the inſtruments of God's further mercies to her, and not to check his good intentions, by the wickedneſs of your lives, or the profligacy of your manners.

manners. And, firſt exhorting you to perſevere in giving the praiſe due to God, from whom all bleſſings deſcend, allow me, in a few words, to direct your preſent good reſolutions, and to lay before you that duty, the chearful performance of which, will ſecure to you the continuation of God's favour, and cauſe, that "one of you ſhall chace a thouſand," and in the ſervice of our country, "two put ten thouſand to flight."

Now remember, that a good, and an holy God made you, and made you for virtue, and for happineſs; that he ſent down his Son, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to redeem you from ſin and miſery, when you had loſt yourſelves to God, and happineſs. Fear him for his power, love him for his goodneſs, embrace his covenant of grace, which Chriſt holds forth to you in his Goſpel, and, by a life of benevolence, of purity, holineſs, and faith in a Mediator, render yourſelves worthy of happineſs in Heaven.

God is a kind, an indulgent parent; he wants not your ſervices, he needs not your obe-

obedience. All his commandments to enforce virtue, and a good life, mean only that you ſhould, by a compliance with them, make yourſelves capable of receiving bleſſings, and happineſs from his hands. Would you deſpiſe, or mock a parent, who ſtudied to make you happy, who confined all his authority to the enjoining of you to accept of bleſſings from him? Then may you forget your God, whom you know only by his goodneſs; then may you curſe, and blaſpheme that holy name, which means whatever is benevolent, and kind. But better things may be expected from you, whom God hath honoured. Curſing and ſwearing particularly will have no place in your converſation. All will be mild, chaſte, ſenſible, diſcreet. Think then of God, reſpect him, obey him, pray to him, believe in him, look up to him for aſſiſtance in every diſtreſs, in every danger; and, by a good and a ſober life, make yourſelves happy under his care and protection.

We live here, each man with his brother: from the mutual help and aſſiſtance of each other,

other we draw every comfort, every enjoyment in life. We are embarked in one cauſe, as in one bottom. In ſhort, we are of one family, for we have all one father, even God. Our general intereſt and welfare muſt therefore be the ſame. Let us then do good to each other; let us love, aſſiſt, relieve, defend, every man his neighbour; for in ſo doing, we promote our own intereſt and happineſs. In doing good to our neighbour, in aſſiſting and making him happy, God hath enabled us to make ourſelves happy, to be pleaſed, and ſatisfied with our own conduct. In ſhort, to love our neighbour is the true way to benefit ourſelves. Is there one among you remarkable for being kind-hearted, and obliging, diſcreet, ſober, mild, and forbearing? Obſerve how you all run to befriend, to aſſiſt, and ſuccour him; while the peeviſh, ill-natured man, or treacherous tale-bearer, is ſhunned and abhorred, even by his moſt intimate companions. Let kindneſs, good offices, and brotherly love, univerſally prevail among you; you will be as one family, happy in each other, and irreſiſtible by any force.

You

You are reaſonable creatures, meant by God to improve in virtue and knowledge here, that you may be capable of happineſs in Heaven hereafter. Conſider what dignity this reflection ſhould give you. Shall the future inhabitant of Heaven continue in brutal ignorance, beſot himſelf with liquor, or debaſe himſelf by debauchery? Drunkenneſs and debauchery, in common account, are joined with our notions of beaſtiality; but brutes, unleſs corrupted by the commerce of mankind, are incapable of ſuch degrading exceſſes. Heaven is an high and holy place, and will receive only the chaſte, the ſober, the temperate man. Our employment there will be to ſearch out, and learn, the wonders of God's creating love; and we muſt fit ourſelves for it, by making a ſuitable progreſs in knowledge and virtue here. Your profeſſion is particularly adapted for making this improvement; for God ſheweth his wonders in the deep, and placeth daily before your eyes the works of his power and goodneſs. Therefore be men, ſtudy God's works, and look up to your abiding city, where the rewards of gra-

titude, of temperance, of ſobriety, and improvement, are laid up in ſtore for you.

Further, as the ſervants of our country, you muſt chearfully obey, and execute the orders of your officers. Unleſs you had obeyed, unleſs you had exerted yourſelves in the public cauſe, Providence could not have bleſſed you with your late ſucceſs. Unleſs you perſevere in obedience, God cannot continue to bleſs our country by your hands. Such an obedient diſpoſition cuts off at once all tendency to murmuring, mutiny, and deſertion; crimes, indeed, unworthy of men, to whom their country owes all its wealth, its greatneſs, and ſecurity; crimes which are never found in the thorough ſeaman, (for he is patient, perſevering, and faithful) but in the lazy, the fickle, the moroſe, the turbulent, the half-bred, who are the reproach of the profeſſion.

But ſuppoſing you to be ever ſo well inclined to the ſervice, and ever ſuch perfect maſters of your duty, you cannot obey or execute

ecute orders, unleſs you carefully avoid drunkenneſs and ſotting; for the drunkard is not maſter of his own actions, and therefore is incapable of any obedience; nay, he muſt be watched and guarded againſt, as if he were a deſperate enemy, prepared to ſet the ſhip on fire, overſet her, or run her amidſt rocks and ſands. Sobriety, therefore, is peculiarly the virtue of a good ſeaman; and I appeal to you, if there is one among you diſtinguiſhed by the love of his comrades, by the eſteem of his officers, by riſing gradually in the ſervice, beyond his firſt hopes, is he not ſober, attentive, diligent, obedient, never murmuring, never complaining? Is a man remarked for being quarrelſome, ſeditious, diſobedient, ſottiſh, (for theſe qualities often go together) you will find him inſenſibly ſinking from his firſt expectations in the ſervice, to the loweſt offices, till ſome loathſome diſeaſe, or puniſhment for ſome flagrant breach of the ſervice, cuts off his hopes, his life, and profligacy together.

What then remains, my brethren, but that, by thankfulneſs to God, by reverence for his

name, by faith in his Son, by obedience to his laws, by the love of our brethren, by the ſobriety of our lives, by obedience to our officers, by the chearful performance of our duty to our country, we induce God to continue to bleſs us, and make us the inſtruments of bleſſings to our country, that, in her cauſe, we may go on, "one of us to chace a thouſand, and two to put ten thouſand to flight." Which may God, in his mercy to mankind, ſpeedily grant, that peace may again deſcend, and bleſs the dwellings of all people, and that the laws of God, and his Chriſt our Saviour, may no more be prevented by the tumults of war from extending their influence among the nations. Amen.

SER-

SERMON II.

The Duty of exerting ourselves in the Cause of our Country.

Deut. xx. 4.

The Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you againſt your enemies, to ſave you.

THE Jews were taught, in the law of Moſes, to refer every public event to a particular, over-ruling Providence, which, while they were obedient and virtuous, directed all occurrences, and even the hearts of their enemies, to the advancement of national proſperity; but, when they became diſobedient, and abandoned themſelves to ini-

quity, made even the weakeſt enemy, and the ſmalleſt inſect, an inſtrument of divine vengeance to puniſh, and to deſtroy them.

Agreeably to this opinion, Moſes, ſpeaking from God, thus addreſſeth them: "If thou ſhalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God, to obſerve and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day; the Lord thy God will ſet thee on high above all the nations of the earth. Bleſſed ſhalt thou be in the city, and bleſſed ſhalt thou be in the field; bleſſed ſhalt thou be when thou comeſt in, and bleſſed ſhalt thou be when thou goeſt out. The Lord ſhall cauſe thine enemies that riſe up againſt thee, to be ſmitten before thy face: they ſhall come out againſt thee one way, and flee before thee ſeven ways. And all people of the earth ſhall ſee that thou art called by the name of the Lord: and they ſhall be afraid of thee.---But if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to obſerve to do all his commandments and his ſtatutes; then all theſe curſes ſhall come upon thee, and overtake

overtake thee. Curſed ſhalt thou be in the city, and curſed ſhalt thou be in the field. Curſed ſhalt thou be when thou comeſt in, and curſed ſhalt thou be when thou goeſt out. The Lord ſhall cauſe thee to be ſmitten before thine enemies: thou ſhalt go out one way againſt them, and flee ſeven ways before them; that thou mayeſt fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God*." This chapter, nay the whole book, deſerves the ſerious peruſal of every man, who thinks for himſelf, or his country. And the hiſtory of the Jews is a remarkable comment on it: for, in proportion to their virtue or wickedneſs, they roſe or fell, as here they were forewarned.

My brethren, if in theſe times any nation can be ſaid to have experienced particular interpoſitions of Providence in its favour, (and, God be thanked, Providence has more to do in the affairs of life, than bad men wiſh, or are apt to imagine) our country may, above

* Deut. xxviii.

all others, apply to itſelf that happy diſtinction. Wars abroad, commotions at home, oppreſſive tyrants, deſtroying fire, waſting famine, every alarming accident, which, in like circumſtances, have introduced ruin and ſlavery into other ſtates, have all, in turn, contributed to perfect our conſtitution, to ſecure our liberties, and aggrandize our wealth. And could this have uniformly been the conſequence in different ſituations, through ſucceſſive ages, but from his directing hand, who holds the univerſe in his balance, who weighs in his ſcales the fate of every kingdom?

One ſuch period ſeems now to be approaching faſt, big with important conſequences to our country, and awfully deciſive of her fate. The nature of theſe conſequences, the complexion of this fate, either to proſperity or to ruin, are, in a great degree, placed in your hands, her ſons, and rightful protectors. In this emergency ſhe wiſhfully looks up to you for defence and ſafety. I will not doubt of your intentions towards her. Your

honeſt

honeſt hearts favour her welfare. Your hands have ever been ready to contribute to her ſecurity and advancement: yet ſince, "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;" ſince God alone can give effect to the beſt endeavours, it becomes neceſſary to diſcover the means, that particular conduct which will continue to ſecure the Lord on our ſide, when we contend in the cauſe of our country. He giveth victory; from him proceedeth ſucceſs. He alone can confound our enemies, or ſhield our heads in the day of battle. Now Moſes promiſeth ſucceſs in war, and proſperity in peace, to them who obey the Lord in avoiding ſin, and following virtue; and from his time to this, obedience to God continues to produce like effects.

As men employed in the ſervice of our country we have little to do with thoſe ſpeculative points, and thoſe ambitious views, which too often ſpread combuſtion among nations. Nothing will ſooner break, nothing has more perverted the ſpirit of the profeſſion, than

than an introduction of factious party rage. On this element, our duty lies, not in pointing out our weak ſides to our enemies, not in cavilling at the management of things without our province, not in propagating our gloomy deſpondency as to the iſſue, but in acting for our country, in advancing her cauſe, in repelling every affront offered to her honour, in protecting our fellow-citizens, wherever oppreſſed or attacked.

And it is our comfort, that there ſtill remains in the body of the people, in you in particular, virtue and vigour to maintain our country's cauſe, and humble every inſulting foe. Though as ſervants, and guardians of our country's weal, I conclude our duty to be, not political diſcuſſion, but hardy, perſevering action; yet, in the preſent diſpute, our cauſe may well bear the light. Never was a nation forced with more reluctance into a quarrel, in which every thing valuable to a community lies at ſtake, than we have been in the preſent caſe.

We

We may, therefore, truſt confidently to the juſtice of our country's cauſe; and need only to be anxious, that our conduct, in its ſupport, be anſwerable to its goodneſs.

The conduct, which in us will ſecure ſucceſs to our country, is twofold. It reſpects our behaviour, firſt, as men, ſecondly, as guardians of the ſtate. As men, God commands us to be chaſte, temperate, ſober; to act honeſtly by, to love, defend, and aſſiſt our brother; to fear God, to honour his name, to ſet him before us in all our works, to look up to him in all our wants, to place a confidence in him, to reverence his word, to reſpect his worſhip; in ſhort, to behave always as in his preſence, and as accountable to him for our conduct.

To ſuch men, to ſuch combatants, God hath promiſed ſucceſs. The ſottiſh drunkard, the heedleſs debauchee, the lurking thief, the treacherous backbiter, the unfeeling ſelfiſh man, the profane ſwearer, the daring blaſphemer, the mocker of his God, hath put

put it out of the power of goodneſs itſelf to bleſs him with ſucceſs. If ſuch men be engaged on the better ſide, ſtill Providence ſhall ſo order things, that the ſucceſs of their party ſhall exclude their benefit: even as the nobleman of Samaria, for mocking at God's promiſe of relief pronounced by Eliſha, was trodden to death by the people thronging out to ſeize the ſpoil of their enemies. Fix it then in your hearts, that you muſt be good men, if you wiſh to have God on your ſide, if you hope that he will bleſs your country by you, and you with your country.

Now this ſobriety of life and manners; this good-will and kindneſs to your brother; this fear of, and confidence in, God, will mightily fit you for doing your duty to your country, which is the ſecond view in which you are to conſider yourſelves. A ſober, a diſcreet man, fearing God and loving his brother, will be faithful and diligent in his ſtation, will ſhare in the labour of his companions, will be obſervant of command. For thus to do his duty to his country, is to love

his

his brother in the moſt extenſive ſenſe within his power. Obedience to orders particularly muſt be full, implicit, without murmuring, without cavilling. This noble fabric, this floating fortreſs, committed to us by our country to be directed againſt the foe, muſt be animated as with one ſoul, and guided as with one hand, to anſwer the anxious expectations of our fellow-citizens. But thus it cannot be, if in the moment of execution we pretend to examine or diſpute the propriety of orders. And as a motive for this obedience, conſider that your officers have friends, have family, have country, have rank, have characters to combat for; that the management of their weighty charge gives them many an uneaſy hour, which muſt be carefully concealed from you. You may, therefore, ſafely truſt your intereſt to their care, for it is inſeparable from their ſucceſs.

Or ſuppoſe that, in your opinion, things might be better regulated. Still a deficient plan is better than none, or a confuſion of plans, inconſiſtent with, and contradicting each

each other; as muſt happen, where men preſume to diſpute in the hour of action, or to diſcuſs the propriety of a command, when they ſhould be employed in carrying it to effect. It particularly concerns you, that officers of experience and reputation may not, on any important occaſion, by your diſobedience or ill conduct, ſuffer a diminution of that eſteem, which they have acquired by long painful ſervice, at the hazard of their lives.

Now this implicit obedience is neceſſary to make your efforts in the public ſervice ſucceſsful. It is not a hardſhip impoſed on you, but a qualification for performing the duty of your ſtation, the protection of yourſelves and your country. And how muſt the reflection animate that man in the day of battle, how irreſiſtible muſt be his vigour, who keeps before his eyes, who conſiders as truſted to his care his country's ſafety, her laws, her vengeance on a perfidious foe, the honour of his commander, his own family, his friends, what-

whatever he values as a man, or enjoys as a citizen.

Nor fancy that I am drawing you out of the line of religion, when I exhort you to continue to exert yourſelves in your country's ſervice. It is too much the cuſtom to diſtinguiſh religion from common life; and religion, and every private and ſocial virtue have ſuffered by the ſeparation. Yet religion aims at making us good men, and worthy members of ſociety here, and fits us for happineſs hereafter. Every action, which as men or members of ſociety we can perform with reflection, may have religion in view, may encourage us to expect from God aſſiſtance and reward. Nor is any action ſo trifling, indifferent, or foreign in common account to religion, but an improper or bad motive ſhall make it ſinful, and worthy of puniſhment from above. And if it be ſo in the common or trifling actions of private life, ſhall we ſeparate religion and virtue from a ſervice, on which depend not our own lives and happineſs only, but the laws, the liberties and religion

gion of our country? No, my brethren, having theſe purpoſes in view while engaged in your country's cauſe, you are properly, virtuouſly, religiouſly employed. And you, on whom our country depends, are indiſpenſibly obliged to take care, that neither your bad lives, nor your diſobedience and ill conduct in the ſervice, may ever come between her and the ſucceſs, which Providence deſigns to beſtow on her by your hands.

Be ſober, be temperate, be kindly affected to each other; fear God, avoid profane ſwearing, filthy converſation; be ſerious, be diſcreet, be obſervant of your officers, be chearfully obedient to command, and God will continue to bleſs your efforts in your country's cauſe; will lay her enemies proſtrate before you; will make you the happy inſtruments of her proſperity; will, for your ſakes, bleſs and raiſe her up; will give vigour to her laws, and make her pure religion flouriſh.

In what a noble point of view doth this repreſent you and your profeſſion, the avengers

gers of your country's wrongs, the guardians of her honour, the inſtruments of her wealth, the cauſe of her proſperity? How doth every generous ſentiment inſpire, and carry you forward to action? What need of words to perſuade you to a conduct that ſprings from your duty, reflects on yourſelves honour, and brings advantage to your country?

Yet when we reflect, and find that the ſame conduct which enables you to ſerve and protect your country, makes you good men, and is that very line of duty which religion preſcribes as the condition of inheriting the kingdom that Chriſt hath purchaſed for you by his death, and now holds out to your acceptance by his condeſcending love, the motives for your virtue, your obedience, your diligence, your exertion in the cauſe of our country become irreſiſtible.

May God bleſs you with his grace, to be the willing and effectual inſtruments of his

favour to our country. And may you, by a life of ſobriety, religion, and virtue, attain, for your reward, an everlaſting crown of glory in heaven, through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

SER-

SERMON III.

SINFULNESS OF MUTINY.

NUMBERS xvi. 12.

And Moſes ſent to call Dathan and Abiram the ſons of Eliab: which ſaid, we will not come up.

I Mean, brethren, to uſe the preſent opportunity to warn you of the ſin and danger of a murmuring, mutinous diſpoſition, or of that behaviour which leads you to diſpute and diſobey the orders of your officers. I take this early occaſion, that I may appear to caution you about it rather than reprehend you for it; to guard you againſt

it as an unworthy habit, not impute it to you as a fault you have actually committed.

In doing this it will be neceſſary to eſtabliſh, under God's law, the right of your officers to command, or their claim to your obedience, as the foundation of your duty.

Now God intended man for ſociety, by making him as an individual, helpleſs and weak, and annexing all the comforts and benefits of life to the ſocial ſtate, to divided labour, and mutual help. But as the race of man, taken as a whole, is an object too great for the attention of the individual, and is too extenſive to fall within the ſphere of his activity, God, by giving different languages and different features, hath broken and divided it into diſtinct communities and nations. And the plain purpoſe of this diviſion is to give man's bias to ſociety a field of action adapted to his abilities, and to excite an emulation among different nations to improve themſelves in the knowledge of God's works, and in the uſeful arts of ſocial life. Now though we certainly owe a general good-

good-will to mankind, which ſhould ſhew itſelf on every particular occaſion without diſcriminating its objects; yet thoſe very benevolent moderns, who deſpiſe the tie of country to call themſelves citizens of the world, carry their ſentiments much farther than nature hath extended their power. But indeed the fact, as it appears in common life, is, that ſuch men affect to fix their attention on diſtant objects, that they may have a pretence for overlooking what is near, and in their power.

This two-fold ſtate of man draws after it important conſequences. Separate ſocieties connect their members in one common tie, for the purpoſe of acquiring or ſecuring the benefits ariſing from mutual ſupport. Communities, as they oppoſe themſelves to each other, have, or think they have contradictory intereſts, which produce all the deſtructive effects of hatred and revenge between different ſtates, and give to each, taken ſeparately, a ſpirit of emulation and improvement to com-

pact them internally, and enable them to repel attacks, and reſiſt oppreſſion.

We need not examine if God made the nations for a ſtate of warfare or not. It is ſufficient for our purpoſe that Providence draws good out of evil, leaving the turbulent ambitious diſturbers of the world anſwerable for the evil that they do, and framing it into occaſions of carrying on its own gracious purpoſes: for war is the proper field for every noble virtue, every praiſe-worthy quality. Contempt of danger, patience, public ſpirit; a forgetfulneſs of ſelf when put in balance with country; great efforts, uſeful laws, all ſpring up in war as their native ſoil. Again, war is an inſtrument in the hands of providence to ſecure the bleſſings of ſociety to a virtuous nation, and to puniſh the ſins of a corrupt abandoned people. But generally ſpeaking, individuals are not ſo much concerned with the grounds of a war, as with the defence of their country which is engaged in it; even as a ſon will exert himſelf to reſcue his

his father from a mob, without enquiring how he involved himſelf in it.

Now if war, from whatever cauſe it ſprings, be an almoſt unavoidable conſequence of that mixt ſtate of ſociety and oppoſition, into which mankind is caſt by the God of nature, and has frequently the beſt and greateſt purpoſes in view, every circumſtance attendant on it muſt in ſuch caſes have a ſanction in the laws of our nature. To defend a ſtate from the ravages of its enemies, ſuppoſeth its members to aſſemble in a body prepared for oppoſition. And ſuch bodies to make a common effort, muſt be conducted by one chief, who again muſt delegate his authority to others under him. Hence, in a band of men aſſembled to defend themſelves and their country, the various ranks of officers, and different extent of their commands.

Obedience to your officers is then a moral duty, founded in nature, combined with ſociety, and required of you by your Creator. And not only is your country armed with

power to punish you for disobedience; not only are the natural ills arising from the crime heavy and painful; not only doth it render you obnoxious to misery in another life, but at times, as in the transaction mentioned in the text, God hath punished mutiny openly in this life, by an extraordinary exertion of destroying power, as if to vindicate the authority delegated from him to magistrates and commanders.

Dathan and Abiram were chief men in the tribe of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob; their cause of mutiny was, that Moses, one of a younger tribe, had, as they thought, encroached on their birth-right, in taking on him the government of the people. Here then is a specious cause of mutiny; for the right of eldest born was then generally respected; and among the Jews particularly carried great privileges with it. Accordingly, their answer to an order from their commander was, "we will not come up. Ye take too much on you, we will not obey you." When the Jews murmured against God himself,

ſelf, or debauched themſelves with the idols around them, their uſual puniſhment was to fall by famine, peſtilence, or the ſword. But a more horrid puniſhment was inflicted on thoſe who mutinied againſt Moſes, whom God had made their chief or captain; the earth opened, and they went down alive into hell.

This at firſt ſight may appear a ſevere, and ſeemingly an arbitrary puniſhment. Shall men be puniſhed to extremity for expreſſing themſelves a little freely, perhaps for uttering their honeſt ſentiments, and ſpeaking from a heart full of its wrongs? Is ſenſibility to be allowed no utterance? Are the overflowings of freedom ſo inexcuſably criminal? This reaſoning, in the circle of diſappointment and diſcontent, would be deemed unanſwerable, and ſufficient to vindicate the moſt ſeditious enterprize. But every notion of ſeverity will immediately vaniſh on viewing the complicated guilt of mutiny and diſobedience.

Moſes was choſen by God to be the leader and lawgiver of his people, to bring them up

out

out of Egypt, and form them for the conqueſt and ſettlement of the land of Canaan: therefore every act of diſobedience againſt him directly oppoſed God's gracious deſigns reſpecting them; and the leſs able that Moſes was in his own perſon to enforce his regulations, the more neceſſary it was that Providence ſhould interpoſe its authority to procure obedience to him. Hence the guilt of Dathan and Abiram's conduct was heightened, by having Moſes, the delegate of Heaven, for its object. To make its puniſhment exemplary, an extraordinary mode, attended with circumſtances of horror, was ſelected to deſtroy them. As unworthy of the light, they were ſent down alive into the pit.

Now in war, of which weſh all only ſpeak, becauſe immediately connected with it, the operations muſt be prompt and inſtantaneous. The ſaving of the ſtate may depend on a ſingle movement; a mutiny, ſpreading from one diſaffected man, may check the beſt laid plan, and bring ruin on the beſt directed armament. Rapine, devaſtation, all the horrors following

following an unſucceſsful war, perhaps loſs of liberty, and ſubjection to a tyrant, may be the conſequences to your country. Can we wonder then if the laws againſt mutiny be ſtrict, if the puniſhment be ſevere? The very being of ſociety depends on the quick vengeance that purſues the offender; and the lower the rank of the oppoſed officer is, the nearer it is to an equality with the diſobedient perſon, the more heavy muſt the correction be.

Nor is his ſituation to be envied, even ſhould the mutineer eſcape the puniſhment deſerved from his country. The man moſt ready to mutiny is the ſullen, moroſe, unſocial being; and ſuch a man's thoughts are of themſelves alone a ſevere avenger. He, his family and connections (if ſuch a man can have family or connections) muſt ſuffer in the general ruin that he has helped to bring on his country; and he has not a generous reflection to ſooth him under the misfortune. The ſenſe of his own guilt, the conſciouſneſs of his having occaſioned the misfortunes of his

his country, will add ſharpneſs to his puniſhment, and deſpair to his ſuffering. In this ſtate of mind no friend ſympathizeth with him, his neighbours avoid him, his fellow-citizens abhor him.

This is not all: the God who made us for our country, will be careful that the man, who by his ill behaviour endeavours to diſappoint him in his gracious deſign to favour and exalt our country, ſhall ſuffer alſo from his hand. All nature is obedient to him. Every part can be made the inſtrument of his vengeance. A thouſand accidents, ſeemingly the uſual courſe of things, ſhall be contrived to blaſt the malicious joy of the diſcontented mutineer for his ſucceſs, and to avenge his country on ſuch an unnatural ſon. Over all hang the terrors of futurity, and the dread of having his habitation allotted with the devil, whoſe crime was mutiny and diſobedience from the beginning.

My brethren, I accuſe you not of a crime pregnant with ſuch guilt, hedged round with

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ſuch puniſhments. My aim is to guard you againſt it, to keep your unſuſpecting hearts from giving way incautiouſly to it; and if this juſt repreſentation ſets the crime of murmuring and mutiny in a new light, in a light which may well ſtartle the man moſt maliciouſly determined to hinder the ſervice of his country, (though I truſt none ſuch are here before me) think how much you are concerned in the keeping of yourſelves free from it; and allow me to finiſh this addreſs in ſuggeſting reaſons for forming the reſolution.

Where this mutiny ariſeth from a ſolitary, ſour, diſcontented mind, I ſhall only obſerve that it is the diſpoſition of the devil; and if the owner ſtrives not, by application and prayer, to conquer it, it will make him miſerable, and betray him to puniſhment here, and, as we have remarked, make him fit company for evil ſpirits hereafter. If it ariſeth, as it moſt frequently doth, among you a ſimple, unthinking people, from a haſty, falſe judgment formed of the deſigns and conduct

of

of your officers, an attention to the following conſiderations will correct the error.

I admit that even good officers, by their various diſpoſitions, are ſome more, ſome leſs ſuited for making the people under them happy: but all officers, whatever be their particular tempers, have a character to ſupport, and that character cannot be ſupported, unleſs their people be capable of exerting themſelves; and they cannot exert themſelves if they be not properly taken care of. Therefore though ſome officers may take different or wrong meaſures with their people, the deſign of all muſt be to make them vigorous and active, by treating them properly, according to their notions of propriety. And I think, in all the variety of officers known to me, I recollect not an inſtance where a ſober, active man was ill treated, where he was not a favourite even with the ſevereſt. And this proves what we have juſt advanced, that the view of officers is at leaſt to make the people vigorous, by uſing them, according to their opinion, well.

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But ſuppoſe a man to be treated harſhly; will mutiny or diſobedience eaſe his ſuffering? Will it not add to the weight, while it renders him leſs able to bear it? Such is the nature of the ſervice, ſo complicated is diſobedience to the officer with injury to the public, that unleſs the officer's ill-conduct be flagrant, the deciſion on an enquiry muſt be in his favour. And in truth, ſuch is the general conduct of the mutineer, that even though his cauſe of complaint be juſt, he almoſt univerſally loſes the advantage by his ſeditious clamorous behaviour under it. If a man feels himſelf improperly treated by his officer, let him make his complaint calmly, do his duty diligently, and be particularly careful of his behaviour to him who has offended him. I will venture to promiſe him redreſs, or that the cauſe of his complaint will not be repeated. But whatever may be the officer's demerit, why wreak your vengeance on the ſervice which cannot offend you, in which your own happineſs is involved, to which you owe not obedience only, but life alſo?

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With reſpect to diſagreeableneſſes and little hardſhips from particular tempers and ſituations, they are incident to the ſervice, and muſt be patiently endured. We are here not for our own particular eaſe, but to ſerve and vindicate the cauſe of our country; and ſmall would our merit be if we made no ſacrifice to it.

In favour of officers we may ſay, that their views in enforcing duty are often miſapprehended; that a thing may appear to be an ill-natured, unneceſſary hardſhip impoſed on the men, which could not poſſibly be avoided. Many times an officer is ſo ſituated, that though he could explain his conduct much to his credit, he dares not, and is obliged to reſt on authority the execution of a thing, which in other circumſtances he might leave to reaſon.

The officer who commands, and the man who executes, ſee things in different points of view; and nothing is more frequent than the danger of a man's opinion on preferment. This ariſes, not from the alteration made by prefer-

preferment in the perſons turn of thinking, as commonly is ſuppoſed, but from his being obliged to conſider the thing in queſtion in a different light. He muſt ſee the thing well and quickly done. The man appointed to execute it would be beſt ſatisfied in having the leaſt poſſible trouble with it. It is no wonder if ſuch perſons differ about the means; and we have ſeen that if an enquiry be made, the deciſion muſt generally be on the ſide of authority.

Further, Many an uneaſy hour, many a diſagreeable view of things muſt the officer hide from his people: he muſt ſpeak confidently when perhaps he deſpairs: he muſt talk of ſucceſs when he is anxious for ſafety; and boaſt of power when he feels weakneſs. When ſuch untoward circumſtances attack from without, it is ungenerous to diſturb him by mutiny within.

But we are here collected together to carry on our country's cauſe; and the due execution of it ſuppoſeth ſome to command, and

others to obey. It becomes us then to make our mutual duty eaſy and practicable. Officers ſhould conſult their peoples feelings. The men by a chearful obedience ſhould make the officers part a pleaſure to them: both with one head to command, one heart to execute, will become irreſiſtible in their union, and will conduct this noble fabric to the important purpoſe of public protection, and the vindication of our country's cauſe againſt every open and inſidious foe.

On the whole, a mutinous diſpoſition never procured to its owner relaxation or favour, never gained his purpoſe or advanced him in the ſervice. It makes the man to be ſhunned and abhorred by all about him, not only as it is a diſagreeable quality, but from the danger of being drawn into the complicated guilt. It expoſeth the man to the heavieſt puniſhment that his country can inflict. It placeth a canker in his breaſt. It makes his preſent hour unhappy, his proſpect wretched. In the mean time vengeance from heaven, though perhaps in a leſs open way than in the caſe

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mentioned in the text, ſeldom ſuffers him to eſcape in this life unpuniſhed; ſo that he feels no preſent ſatisfaction, and can indulge no future hope. Avoid it in yourſelves, diſcountenance it in others. Carry God before you in all you do; propoſe obedience to him in the ſerving of your country. He will ſmooth the way before you. He will turn the hearts of your officers to favour you. By your chearful obedience you will make your duty eaſy, you will purchaſe God's favour here, and happineſs with him in heaven hereafter: which may God grant, through the merits and mediation of his only Son, our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

SERMON IV.

SINFULNESS OF DESERTION.

NEHEMIAH vi. 11.

And I ſaid, Should ſuch a man as I flee?

THE cauſe of religion has ſuffered from no circumſtance more than from the prevailing prejudice of its being ſomething diſtinct from common life. The mind of man is fruitful in reaſons for following his own inclinations, and in excuſes for his not doing what is diſagreeable to him. When therefore he has got hold of this maxim, that common behaviour in life has nothing to do with religion, he has only to argue himſelf

into the opinion, that his immediate buſineſs is with common life, and that religion is the duty of men who have more time and leiſure. And hence the concluſion is drawn, that a man is left to manage himſelf in the common affairs of life, undirected by reaſon, unawed by religion, which laſt is perhaps confined to the narrow province of repeating a prayer, or reading a page in a good book. Thus a man, who on no account would avoid going to church, or ſaying his prayers, ſhall think himſelf at liberty to be ill-natured, peeviſh, and moroſe to every perſon under him, and free to make the lives of his family and dependants miſerable, by every captious method in which he can treat them.

Now this is an exceeding partial way of judging of things. God is not the God of part only of our conſtitution, but of the whole; and as he made us for a certain purpoſe, (which purpoſe extends to every duty of ſociety and religion, comprehending every actual, every poſſible thought or deed in us,) ſo no act of our lives, no imagination of our hearts,

hearts, can be indifferent before him. Every thought, every word, every action muſt, of neceſſity, before God, affect the merit of beings, who are made to love and fear God, to live with their neighbour in mutual dependence, and to prepare themſelves by habits of temperance and purity for happineſs in Heaven: even as a man on a journey cannot make a falſe or an unneceſſary ſtep without leſſening his abilility to proceed, or checking his progreſs. To be more particular: that action cannot be indifferent before God, which affects the eaſe and happineſs of perſons, to whoſe eaſe and happineſs the agent is obliged to contribute.

I intend to conſider the practice of deſertion in the navy as a thing criminal before God; and to eſtabliſh the point, I have need only to ſhew how it affects the welfare of that ſociety with which God has connected us. In doing this I ſhall account for, and vindicate the conſidering of this crime in a religious point of view.

Nehemiah was governor of the Jews under the king of Perſia: he found his people at the loweſt ebb of fortune; and he laboured moſt diligently in retrieving their affairs, and putting them in a ſtate of peace and ſecurity. Certain neighbours, who pretended to be friends, but really hated the Jews, and envied Nehemiah the honour of re-eſtabliſhing them, endeavoured to frighten him from his duty, by telling him that aſſaſſins were lying in wait for him, and that he could not poſſibly eſcape them, but by hiding himſelf in the temple. It was to them that Nehemiah made this anſwer, "Should ſuch a man as I flee?" Shall I quit my ſtation, a ſtation that, as was my duty, I ſolicited, to have it in my power to ſerve my country, and thereby leave that country to be ſwallowed up by her enemies? Can my country have a better claim to the ſervice of any of her ſons than of me? Or to whoſe aſſiſtance can ſhe with confidence apply for protection, if I, in a cowardly manner, decline the taſk? No; I may be in danger, but I muſt perſevere in doing my duty, and leave the iſſue to God, whoſe ſervant I am,

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in whoſe work I am engaged, and which he doubtleſs will bring to perfection: a reſolution which every true-hearted man, employed in the ſervice of his country, muſt approve of, and in his own practice will imitate.

My brethren, we are commanded by God to love and do good to our brother. We are therefore commanded to love our country, which comprehends thoſe brethren and relations whom God hath made to be the objects of our love, which muſt flouriſh before they can enjoy happineſs, in whoſe proſperity all private ſecurity and ſatisfaction is bound up. Society then draws all its laws and ſanctions from the ſame God who made man for ſociety; and it is a fundamental law of ſociety to call out for the ſervice of the public any particular number of its members, in any particular profeſſion or calling. The ſame law which calls men out to ſerve their country, obliges them to the faithful diſcharge of the duty allotted them; forbids all mutiny, murmuring, diſobedience in, and deſertion from the ſervice, and arms the public with power

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to punish every crime committed against, or destructive of its purpose.

This view of the subject cuts off all distinction between volunteers and impressed men; because, as we all in our several stations owe our service to our country, it matters not how we were brought into that service; or rather, the impressed man owes a superior application in it, to make up for his tardiness and reluctance in entering into it. No man, properly qualified, is at liberty to serve or not to serve at his caprice: and when once entered, he must persevere in a duty which is founded on our constitution, as first formed by God. No danger, no disagreeableness in the service itself, no ill-treatment from officers (though God will certainly punish them ten fold for it) can ever be a good excuse for our abandoning our station. When our country calls for them, we must sacrifice our lives in her cause, much more must we in her service submit to hardships and difficulties inseparable from every active scene, without which no valuable purpose ever was secured.

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When therefore we, who are engaged in the ſervice of our country, negligently perform our duty or deſert from it, we commit a crime againſt God who enjoined us that duty. We refuſe that aſſiſtance and protection which is due to our parents, our families, our relations, our neighbours; we abandon the vindication of thoſe laws which protect us, of the ſociety in which we inherit every valuable thing that we poſſeſs: and when we are guilty of this, can we pretend to regard God who commanded the duty, our brother who is the object of it; or heaven which is to be its reward? No; Deſertion is a complicated crime againſt God, our neighbour and our own happineſs. It ſuppoſeth a bad, an unworthy, unſociable diſpoſition: it leaves us obnoxious to God's wrath, and to the laws of our country; while the reſentment of our companions hems us in, and remorſe of conſcience conſumes us with fear.

The truth of this will plainly appear by only taking a view of a ſeaman in the act of deſertion. From ſome capricious diſlike to

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ſome officer, or the ſervice, or more frequently a capricious deſire of roving, the inconſiderate man has reſolved to deſert, to abandon the ſervice, to leave behind him his pretenſions to preferment, to a retreat in Greenwich, perhaps to two or three years hard earned wages. In order to get an opportunity to ſteal away, he muſt feign an hypocritical aſſiduity in his duty, that he may be truſted in a boat; or he forges ſome lie of a friend, or buſineſs that requires his preſence on ſhore; or he takes advantage of a dark night, like a coward to abandon his ſtation, in ſwimming to land at the riſk of his life. Thus the very act of deſertion is not only an act of baſe perfidy, a breach of duty to our country, but it is a mean, pitiful lie before God, the God of truth: And the circumſtance in which the lie is framed or acted, will enhance its criminality and heighten its puniſhment.

When he gets aſhore he dares not ſhew his face as an honeſt man; he lurks in corners aſhamed of himſelf, bluſhing for his conduct; he is obliged to aſſociate with the moſt

moſt worthleſs diſeaſed wretches of both ſexes, from whom he catches every profligate habit, and contracts every loathſome diſeaſe; while he is forced to live on unwholeſome ſcraps, or to riſk his life in ſtealing to ſatisfy his hunger. But he ſoon meets with ſome kidnapper who ſells him to a cruel ſavage of a ſhipmaſter, perhaps a foreigner, perhaps the enemy of his country who works him beyond his ſtrength, and then turns him aſhore in a ſtrange country, cheated of his wages, unable to work for ſubſiſtence. Perhaps a loathſome ditch receives his emaciated carcaſe, or he wanders a bloated, diſeaſed vagabond, kept from day to day alive by the reluctant hand of modern charity, an out-caſt from ſociety. Thus (for this is no feigned caſe) the deſerter is equally a compound of iniquity and folly; he is falſe to his country, cruel to himſelf, miſerable while he lives from dread of detection, and abandoned in his diſtreſs by that ſociety which he refuſed to ſerve.

Set againſt him the ſober man, who chearfully ſerves his country, and ſee if the different

ferent conditions will bear a compariſon. Firſt, the ſeaman's duty in a king's ſhip is in general eaſier and better timed than in the merchant ſervice, for which the public is deſerted. In the navy, officers take a pride in exerting themſelves to get an healthy, vigorous ſhip's company. Your health is conſulted, your ſickneſs is provided for. Though your wages be nominally ſmaller than in the merchant ſervice, yet you ſave moſt for your families in the public ſervice. If you have any ambition to raiſe yourſelves in your profeſſion, there are various offices to which, according to your qualifications, you may be preferred, which give you eaſe in your duty, and conſideration among your fellows: particularly a ſober, diligent conduct recommends you to the confidence and good-will of your officers; and from my acquaintance with the ſervice, I think I can with hardly a ſingle exception ſay, that I never knew a quiet, diligent ſeaman, who was ill treated by any officer, or who indeed was not a favourite with the officers in general. We now and then meet with a crabbed, implacable officer:

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but it muſt be confeſſed, that generally there are turbulent, diſobedient, worthleſs men, ſufficient for the exerciſe of their ill-nature, to be found in every ſhip, whom that love of juſtice that is inherent in even the moſt unfeeling hearts, points out as objects of their ſeverity: as if both were brought together by Providence, for the mutual puniſhment and plague of each other's reſtleſs, diſagreeable qualities.

If we take into account that very noble retreat which is provided for you in Greenwich hoſpital, a chearful perſeverance in the ſervice of your country is equally your intereſt and your duty. You have applied yourſelves to a ſea-life. To paſs by the conſideration of your country's having a claim to your ſervice which cannot be extinguiſhed, and of your obligation when called on to defend her cauſe, the merchant ſervice cannot contend with the navy in eaſineſs of duty, in opportunity of preferment, in real profit, in care when ſick, in a retreat for old age. Therefore the ſeaman who chearfully perſeveres in ſerving

ing his country, is both prudent and virtuous: in his country he has ſecured a protector and nurſe for his latter days; he has made good men his benefactors, and God his friend.

We have conſidered the deſerter's guilt as a crime againſt thoſe fundamental laws of ſociety, which have God for their author, and certainly will have him for their avenger. But he who withdraws from the ſervice of his country, as far as in him lies, abandons her to the violence of the enemy, and is anſwerable in equity for every loſs and defeat which he might have helped to have prevented. He therefore is to be ſhunned, to be held in abhorrence by every honeſt man, as the deſtroyer of his country. The laws of every ſtate make his puniſhment death, and juſtly; for in him you puniſh an enemy to his country, a diſobedient child, an unnatural parent, an unfeeling relation, a cruel neighbour: and ſuch a man's preparation to meet his God in judgment, ſhall be left to your own reflections.

Further,

Further: frequent deſertions in the navy, in a manner, force officers to be ſevere, and apparently hard-hearted. They cannot allow you the indulgence which the ſervice might otherwiſe permit, becauſe of the improper uſe which you make of it. You petition, you ſolicit for leave to go on ſhore, on a thouſand falſe pretences, (I am here addreſſing the deſerter) when your true deſign is to leave the ſhip: or when on ſhore you get drunk, (the common conſequence of which is a riot) you become the prey of ſome abandoned harlot, or of ſome deſigning ſeducer, who inveigles you from your duty to diſeaſe, miſery, and ſin. Thus the ill-conduct of a few affects the intereſt and indulgence of the whole. The deſerter therefore not only injures his companions by withdrawing from their ſide his help in the ſervice, but he is the enemy of their eaſe, their health, their indulgence. And were officers inclined to overlook his crime, his companions cannot be ſuppoſed ready to forgive him, for he has made the ſervice hard and diſagreeable to them.

My brethren, your good ſenſe has gone along with your miniſter, and ſubſcribed to the juſtice of his obſervations; obſervations not drawn from books, but from fact, from his knowledge of the ſervice. But God forbid that I ſhould make a general accuſation: you are a uſeful body, you love your country, you are ever ready to lay down your lives in her defence. Still, if one or a few be guilty of the crime, I do my duty when I warn you of your ſin and danger; and addreſſing ſuch, I ſay you ſin againſt your companions, yourſelves, your country, and your God; you plunge into miſery and want, you lay wretchedneſs up in ſtore here, and doom yourſelves to deſpair hereafter.

Doubtleſs many have committed the crime, that never thought of its ſinfulneſs; but want of thought leſſens not the ill conſequences of an action: it diminiſhes not the injury done to your fellows, nor the hurt received by your country; nor can it ever be pleaded before God, for in his preſence it is itſelf a crime. Again; puniſhment cannot make

make allowance for folly, miſery will not diſtinguiſh it from iniquity; and in his fellows, this plea in the deſerter muſt to reſentment add contempt.

What then remains my brethren, but that each man ſhould ſay in the ſpirit of Nehemiah, ſhall I abandon the cauſe of my country; my country that contains my parents, my family, my friends, whoſe laws protect me, which has done every thing poſſible to make my ſervice eaſy to me, which holds out a noble retreat for me, when no longer able to help her or myſelf? Shall I by deſertion expoſe myſelf to fear, to vice, to want, to diſeaſe? Shall I provoke God? Shall I turn to enemies companions with whom ſo often I have braved the greateſt dangers? Shall I ſet my own conſcience againſt me, and ſtart at every ſtrange face, leſt I be diſcovered and delivered over to puniſhment? If I am not, who then is obliged to ſerve my country? I will ſerve it faithfully, and truſt to God and it for my reward. To which reſolution, may the grace of God incline and keep you in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

SERMON V.

On Drunkenness.

Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.

Who hath woe? who hath ſorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cauſe? who hath redneſs of eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek mixt wine.

MY brethren, I mean to lay before you the ill conſequences of drunkenneſs, a vice in which you are but too apt to indulge yourſelves; a habit that makes you neglect your duty, checks and endangers the ſervice in which you are engaged, and expoſeth you alike to accidents and puniſhments.

In ſeveral preceding addreſſes, I have endeavoured to make you ſenſible, that religion demanded of you a ſtrict attention to the duties of your profeſſion, by which you are the ſervants and guardians of your country; and that you never could offend againſt, or neglect theſe duties, without breaking through the precepts of religion, and ſinning againſt God. I here again repeat the caution, and ſpeaking equally from reaſon and God's word, declare to you, that God will certainly reward, as if performed to himſelf, the faithful diſcharge of that duty to your country which he enjoined, when he formed a relation between you and it; and that he will puniſh your diſobedience, or neglect of that duty, as if the offence had been committed immediately againſt his authority.

Now drunkenneſs is a vice, which not only diſables you from doing your duty, (though perhaps the ſafety of yourſelves, of thoſe who are embarked with you, nay of your country, may depend on your ready performance) but it is a vice which poſitively leads you to the com-

commiſſion, not only of every poſſible folly, but of almoſt every poſſible crime. A man when drunk, not only cannot obey or follow orders, but deprived as he is of his reaſon, he counteracts them, does the thing directly oppoſite to what he was commanded, lets go when bid to hold faſt, perhaps ſets the ſhip on fire or blows her up, is the cauſe of her being foundered, wrecked, or delivered up to the enemy.

Drunkenneſs therefore may be ſaid to be the greateſt crime, which as ſervants of the public you can poſſibly commit; becauſe, whenever you reſolve to get drunk, you in fact reſolve to be guilty of the greateſt miſchiefs in your power, both to yourſelves and your country, in thus determining to caſt off that reaſon or command of yourſelves, which alone can enable you to carry through that duty, which God requires you to perform to yourſelves and your country.

It is needleſs to ſpend many words in explaining to you what is meant by drunken-

neſs: you are all, either in your own or in your companions practice, too well acquainted with the vice: it is ſuch an abuſe of ſtrong liquors as overpowers your reaſon, deprives you of the uſe of your limbs, renders you incapable of following advice, or of obeying command, and lays a ſure foundation for a ſtate of bad health and diſeaſe. In ſhort, it is that uſe of wine or ſpirits, which in the vulgar phraſe, during the fit, transforms the man into a beaſt. I ſay vulgar, becauſe if we except ſome few beaſts, whoſe natural way of life has been changed and corrupted by their intercourſe with men, brutes ſeem not to be capable of ſuch a degrading folly as drunkenneſs. However, the phraſe of drunken beaſt is too familiar to the ear, and too expreſſive of the man's condition, not to be readily and generally underſtood.

Solomon points out in the text, the ills which ariſe from drunkenneſs; and he draws ſuch a catalogue of them, and paints them in ſuch colours, as may ſeriouſly alarm the man who is moſt attached, or moſt enſlaved to the

habit.

habit. "Who," ſaith he, "hath woe? who hath ſorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cauſe? who hath redneſs of eyes?" My brethren, could the moſt diligent obſerver of our days more accurately deſcribe what happens in your drunken brawls? Who plunges himſelf imprudently into trouble? who weds himſelf to wretchedneſs? who involves himſelf in quarrels? who expoſeth his perſon to injury and hurt? who impairs his conſtitution? who endangers his life? The ſot who drowns in ſtrong drink that reaſon which ſhould pilot him ſafe through every hazard, and conduct him to ſecurity, to health, to happineſs.—He goes on to tell the drunkard, "thine eyes ſhall behold ſtrange women;" in thy folly, thou ſhalt become the prey of ſome baſe wanton, who ſhall allure thee from thy duty, ſhall ſtrip thee of all thou art worth, render thee vile, contemptible, diſeaſed, loathſome; and after ſhe has reduced thee to this abhorred ſtate, ſhall unfeelingly betray and deliver thee up to ſtripes and impriſonment. "Thine heart ſhall utter perverſe things." In thy

drunken

drunken fit thou ſhalt ſpeak unadviſedly, and in thy ſober hours be obliged to maintain it with the loſs of character, at the hazard of thy life. "Thou ſhalt be as he that lieth down in the midſt of the ſea, or as he that lieth on the top of a maſt." Danger and hazard ſhall ſurround the drunkard, while prudence, that ſhould conduct him through, or deliver him from them, is baniſhed and driven aloof. Here my brethren, the ſituation of a drunken man is compared with your ordinary condition, as if the preacher had formed no notion of a drunken ſailor, his way of life being of itſelf ſo full of hazard, as to require the ſtricteſt attention to temperance and ſobriety. And now follows the curſe that crowns the drunkard's miſery. "They have ſtricken me ſhalt thou ſay, and I was not ſick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When ſhall I awake, I will ſeek it yet again." —The man becomes callous, inſenſible of his ſituation: he glories in his ſottiſhneſs, and becauſe his conſtitution yields not at once to the ſlow poiſon, he triumphs in his exceſs, returning with the ſow that is waſhed, to

wallowing

wallowing in the mire, till he ſinks down a loathſome compound of contempt, diſeaſe, diſguſt, even to his neareſt relations.

Theſe are ſome of the ills which generally follow the practice of ſottiſhneſs; for to mention all the bad conſequences of the habit, would oblige us to rehearſe every miſery incident to human nature. But when you practiſe it my brethren, particular ills accompany your particular ſituation. In the common drunkard, the wrong and its conſequent injury are confined to the man's own perſon, at the utmoſt extend only to his family: but your conduct affects your country in whoſe ſervice you are engaged, and draws after it a train of conſequences, that include alike the public and your particular fate. By the military laws to which you are of neceſſity ſubject, this crime renders you obnoxious to corporal puniſhment, to have imputed to you, and to ſuffer for every imprudence that accompanies the commiſſion of it. An attachment to the habit deprives you of every chance of advancement in the ſervice; for how

how can a drunkard be truſted with any command in the ſhip, or the care of any of her ſtores. In one of his drunken fits, the ſhip would be in danger of being foundered, burnt, or run on ſhore; no body would be ſafe under, or near him. He, far from being a uſeful companion, as a dangerous internal enemy, muſt be ſecured from doing miſchief.

But when we take futurity into the account, there alſo, not a gleam of comfort ſhines on the lot of the drunkard. Heaven, for which God formed man, is a place of endleſs rational delight. Senſual pleaſure or indulgence, can there find no entrance; all is unbounded benevolence, ſober contemplation, pious praiſe. But for theſe habits the drunkard hath rendered himſelf utterly unfit. The man who only lives for the purpoſe of ſwallowing ſtrong drink; who makes himſelf a mere funnel of intoxication, cannot poſſibly be made capable of the pure joys of heaven. Solomon in another place tells us, that the ſpirit of a man goeth upwards, and that the ſpirit of a beaſt

goeth

goeth downwards to the earth. But if the ſpirit of a man be kept grovelling with that of the beaſts, it will want vigour to mount upwards, and with the brutes be dragged downwards, by thoſe mean, ſenſual indulgencies, in which it has been occupied: in ſhort, heaven and its happineſs reject a drunkard, as a pollution that cannot ſtick to them; and a drunkard would reject heaven and all its joys, becauſe he wants thoſe feelings and faculties, that alone can render them deſirable to him.

Attend now to the condition of the drunkard. The firſt valuable things that go, are his property and his time, both of which he unalienably owes to his family, to the duties of his ſtation, to his country. Then follows his reaſon; and, as it withdraws, contentions, quarrels, fighting, wounds, perhaps murder, enter in ſucceſſion. In the ſtate of intoxication, the man becomes the prey, either of ſome bad woman, or of ſome inſinuating cheat, who allures him from his duty, ſtrips him of his property, pollutes his innocence, deſtroys his health, renders him the averſion, perhaps the curſe

curſe of a family, that formerly was happy in his ſmile. Often in his ſober hours muſt the man anſwer for the freaks of his madneſs, and in his reaſon pay the forfeit of his folly. In the mean while, the ſlow poiſon inſinuates itſelf into his veins, and if ſome rapid fever carries him not ſuddenly off, he according to circumſtances, either waſtes to a ſhadow, or accumulates into an unwieldy maſs of humours, irkſome to himſelf, a burden to all around him.

Theſe ills, which yet are enough to frighten a conſiderate man, are not in your caſe, all the diſagreeable conſequences: you loſe the confidence of your officers; you put an effectual ſtop to all your preferment; you ſubject yourſelves to diſgrace, degradation, puniſhment: your ſituation naturally ſurrounded with danger and accident, throws you every moment, while in the drunken fit, helpleſs into the power of every luckleſs hazard, every fatal chance. If you take futurity into the account, you have ſold your birthright in heaven, the purchaſe of your Saviour's merits,

for

for leſs than a meſs of pottage; you have made God your enemy, and ſin your maſter; which unleſs you repent, will claim you as its own, the blind child of folly, the ſpend-thrift of reaſon, the offender againſt revelation, the deſpiſer of every manly, every aſpiring qualification.

Now my brethren, is there any thing in this account (an account which your own good ſenſe will tell you is not exaggerated) that can be balanced by the tranſient pungency of a ſparkling glaſs? Is there any thing that may be cheaply bought by the delights of even the moſt jovial debauch? Are wounds, poverty, impoſition, diſeaſe, ſtripes, contempt, degradation here, eternal miſery hereafter, to be made welcome, to be willingly embraced, becauſe they follow in the train of drunkenneſs and revelling? I ſpeak to men endued with reaſon; I ſpeak to men who are now ſober, who can reflect on, who can judge, whoſe hearts approve of what I ſay. And ſhall men dignified with reaſon in the ſober hour of reflection, approve of one courſe of

of action, and purſue the oppoſite? applaud ſobriety and all its happy conſequences, yet plunge deliberately into debauchery, embrace contempt, and wed ruin?

Look around among your acquaintance and equals; whom do you eſteem, whom do you love? in whom do your officers place a confidence? whom do they promote? who raiſe themſelves above their fellows? who are uſeful? who have amiable worthy characters among you? the temperate, the ſober, the diligent. While the ſot makes himſelf a laughing ſtock, expoſes himſelf as a mark of contempt, an object for fraud and impoſition to exerciſe their cunning on; the other commands the reſpect, the good-will and good opinion of every one around him: his ſober carriage puts raillery to ſilence, and keeps at a diſtance impoſition and fraud.

And is it indeed neceſſary my brethren, to multiply words, in order to ſhew you the advantages of peace, of a good reputation, of eaſy circumſtances, of health, of the eſteem

of

of your ſuperiours, of advancement in your profeſſion, of the favour of God, of happineſs in heaven? Should I not inſult your good ſenſe by making the attempt?

Yet why will you barter away all theſe? every comfort, every rational enjoyment, every valuable proſpect here and in futurity, for an indulgence, *too fleeting to be fixed, too trifling to be courted, too mean to be named?* Is it impoſſible to enjoy the good things which God hath given you, in that moderation which alone can preſerve a reliſh for them? Or can they not be enjoyed, till you have forgotten, or perhaps, as too generally is the caſe, till in horrid oaths and imprecations, you have inſulted and dared the God whoſe hand beſtowed them?

Children pull in pieces the things of which they are fondeſt, and vent their little miſtaken paſſions againſt thoſe to whom they owe the utmoſt love and gratitude. A drunkard is ſtill more fooliſh, abſurd and unthankful; for he, in the full poſſeſſion of his reaſon and

reflection, and capable of weighing every juſt and probable conſequence, coolly ſits down to ſtrip himſelf of every valuable poſſeſſion, of every diſtinguiſhing attribute, to cruſh in the bud every riſing hope, every reaſonable expectation, to hurl enmity and defiance at his beſt, his only benefactor. But can there poſſibly be a man who hears me, that cheriſhes not the wiſh to gain the good will of his officers, to advance himſelf in the ſervice, to be a bleſſing to his family, to poſſeſs the good opinion of his friends, to rejoice in a ſtate of full health, to enjoy the report of a good conſcience, and to reſt his happineſs in the favour of God?

If theſe things have hitherto been neglected or lightly eſteemed, allow me to ſuppoſe it to have happened, becauſe you have not conſidered the crime of drunkenneſs in a ſerious point of view, as the parent of ſtrife, wounds, poverty, diſeaſe, ſtripes, ſin, miſery. Allow me to look forward to a more ſenſible and better conduct. Amidſt the many good things, that are found among you, let your temperance, your ſobriety, your ready obedience to com-

command, mark you out for examples to all engaged with you in your country's ſervice. The ſame habits will mark you out to all as patterns of health, vigour, uſeful exertion and perſevering ſervice; you will then take a pride in yourſelves as a particular body, and diſdain every vice that can bring ſcandal on the ſhip, as mutiny, deſertion, ſotting, ſwearing. Then will you enable your officers to extend towards you liberties and indulgencies, to make the ſervice eaſy to you, that hitherto they have been obliged to withhold from you for your own ſakes.

And may a good God, after a life of ſobriety, benevolence, piety and active ſervice to our country, make us all happy together in his preſence in heaven hereafter, through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

SERMON VI.

On Common Swearing,

PART I.

EXOD. XX. 7.

Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

WHEN we conſider the majeſty of the God of nature, and reflect on our relation to him as we are his creatures, the very thought ſuppoſeth ſuch an habitual reverence and awe for him, as would confound the moſt diligent enquirer, in his endeavouring to give an account how a reaſonable being

can poſſibly become guilty of ſo daring an inſult to his Creator, as is the taking or uſing his name in vain.

It is a ſin ſo contradictory to the general notion, which we muſt entertain of the dependence of weak man on heaven, is enforced by ſo few motives, can plead ſo few temptations in extenuation, is attended with ſo little pleaſure, and is ſo completely void of profit, that imagination can hardly ſuppoſe the poſſibility of introducing ſuch an habit into the world. Other ſins aim at ſome pretended mental, or ſenſual gratification; but here the leaſt ſatisfaction is not expected or pretended. Men from a wanton careleſſneſs alone inſult the God who gave, and preſerves their being.

So general indeed is this habit of profaning the holy name, that, judging from fact, we ſhould conclude there was ſomething noble in it, that ſome particular pleaſure accompanied it; nay, that without ſwearing, it was impoſſible for a man to make a figure in the world. Few parts of education are ſo nicely, and diligently

ligently attended to, as that of training up young children in this practice. They learn to ſpeak by ſwearing; their tender organs are made ſo familiar with the tremendous word, are ſo well uſed to pronounce hell and damnation, that the ſounds appear quite natural to them: they utter them on all occaſions with propriety and grace. Nay, ſo well marked is our country for this vile practice, ſo copious is our language in expreſſions of blaſphemy, that the terms of ſwearing are the firſt words that ſtrangers learn of Engliſh: they hear them uttered ſo generally, on every occaſion, that they miſtake them for compliments, and naturally addreſs their new acquaintances with an imprecation, as a mode, that they conclude from its frequency, muſt be moſt agreeable to them.

The prevalence of this ſin among us, in a great meaſure, ariſes from a propenſity in our national temper, of carrying to an extreme, every tenet or cuſtom, that once gets a footing among us. And particular circumſtances in our hiſtory have greatly favoured this biaſs

in the preſent caſe. While papiſts, we were the moſt ſuperſtitious adherents of the ſee of Rome: the reformation carried us as far on the other ſide into the wild reveries of enthuſiaſm. And this in our civil wars was made ſuch a cover for ambition, rapine, oppreſſion, that when we regained our ſenſes, we thought we could not run too far into the other extreme of licentiouſneſs. As that ferocious ſpirit of anarchy which enthuſiaſm cheriſheth, had well nigh given the laſt ſtroke to monarchy and law, on the reſtoration, profaneneſs became the mark of loyalty, and grew, and ſpread wide under the influence of an unprincipled court. He was the beſt ſubject, who could invent a new mode of blaſphemy.

The extravagancies of the ſectaries became the object of ridicule, and virtue and religion were ſoon comprehended in the jeſt: this brought impiety, and common ſwearing, its companion, into faſhion; it was a mark of breeding to blaſpheme God's name, and round a period off with horrid oaths and imprecations. The iniquity ſoon deluged the land; it

it ſpread from the court to the cottage, and drew in every rank and profeſſion.

In time indeed, the more refined part of the faſhionable world refuſed to ſhare this degrading crime with the vulgar, and in a great meaſure have laid it aſide: but though the lower people were eager to imitate the great in their profaneneſs, and in truth ſoon went far beyond them, we ſee few attempts made to imitate them in their reformation: the vice hath taken ſuch deep root, and licentiouſneſs is ſo interwoven with our conſtitution, that they ſupport themſelves on their own foundation.

Our army and navy are large ſeminaries for common ſwearing, where amidſt many brave and pious men, inconſiderate perſons may be found, who, not having had an opportunity to ſhew their courage in battle, think they may make up the want by daring to challenge the God of heaven. Each one of our numerous taverns is a ſchool for blaſphemy. Private families alſo too often are nur-

nurſeries of impiety. For if parents be not ſo impious themſelves as to teach their children, they generally turn them over to ſervants, who amply ſupply the defect. You, my brethren, whom I now addreſs, are apt to fancy yourſelves in poſſeſſion of a particular licence for this practice. I ſhall therefore conſider the ſubject in the ſeveral common points of view, at ſome length; and if you will but give that attention to it which is due to its importance, I truſt, with God's grace, I ſhall be able to ſet the heinouſneſs of the ſin ſo fully before you, as to check its progreſs among you; and, if this indeed be the iſſue, we ſhall all rejoice in the event.

Now as this vice is general, and is ſupported by foundations eſtabliſhed, as if on purpoſe, to continue it down to poſterity, it requires the ſtricteſt application to avoid the infection, thus ſurrounding us on every hand, thus ſoliciting us by every allurement of example, friendſhip, acquaintance. To gain this point, we will conſider what is meant by profaning the name of the Lord, the excuſes uſually attempted

attempted for this profanation, the danger accompanying the guilt expreſſed in this threat, "The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain."

God's name is profaned by the abuſe of any thing, or the wanton repetition of any word, by which we know, or ſhould honour him; particularly by mocking at his word, by making a jeſt of thoſe writings which reveal his will, by making light of the ſalvation offered to us by the humiliation of his Son. But at preſent we ſhall chiefly conſider the crime of which we are guilty, when we bandy about his holy name in common diſcourſe, as an expletive, or as a mark of paſſion, or call on him to witneſs trifles or bear teſtimony to falſhood.

From a conſideration of his very nature, we muſt conclude God to be preſent to all his works, to watch over the conduct of all his creatures, particularly his rational creatures; for them he hath framed capable of improvement and merit, and therefore in a great degree maſters of their own fate: therefore no action

action we perform, no word we utter, no thought we indulge can eſcape his notice. As we owe our exiſtence to his goodeſs, our preſervation to his providence, every bleſſing to his bounty, every hope to his promiſe, our intereſt and our gratitude are engaged, that we think, ſpeak, or do nothing that may diſpleaſe him: and this grateful ſentiment, this wiſe concern, will extend our attention to whatever bears a relation to God; for reverence and love accompany gratitude, and where they prevail, a benefactor's name muſt inſpire reſpect. When therefore creatures ſo highly obliged, and ſo neceſſarily dependent as we all are, call on God, or appeal to him, our minds ought to be impreſſed with a profound reſpect for his preſence.

But the man who joins his awful name with trifles, with imprecations, and along with it, repeats the unmeaning wiſh of damnation three or four times in a ſentence, is in improper circumſtances, to do him reverence or honour. He who makes ſo free with the majeſty

majeſty of Heaven, muſt be guilty of the moſt unbecoming inſolence. It is, only heightened infinitely in degree, as if a beggar, while ſoliciting relief, ſhould laugh ſcornfully in a man's face, or turn his back on him with contempt. We ſpeak of the affront ariſing from the irreverent uſe of God's name in common diſcourſe: the iniquity of calling him to witneſs a lie, or importuning him to curſe our neighbour, is a further aggravation of guilt, and demands an increaſe of puniſhment, which ſhall be conſidered in its due place.

But many words are not neceſſary to prove, that a wanton repetition of God's name in common diſcourſe, is a profanation of it: the moſt profane acknowledge this, and confeſs it to be a crime; they pretend only to offer ſomething in excuſe for it. Let us therefore examine the validity of their pleas, and ſee if they be ſuch as a God of mercy can accept from man, a weak ſinful creature, which is the moſt favourable light to view a cri-

criminal in, while daring the wrath of him who holds in his hand his fate.

Now, what hath the greateſt appearance of an argument in favour of ſwearing, and on this element has been frequently uſed to palliate the cuſtom, is "a man in a paſſion muſt curſe and uſe ſhocking imprecations, in order to have a proper effect on thoſe whom he addreſſeth, and who, as he ſuppoſeth have offended him." It is ſaid, they would not believe him to be angry with them, nor would they underſtand or obey him, if he ſpoke not to them in this the common language of paſſion.

But theſe common ſwearers ſhould with ſhame and confuſion reflect, that it is they, and ſuch as they are, who by their wicked practice of ſwearing, have brought ſuch depravity into the world, as gives a colour for this excuſe. Therefore they are bound to uſe their influence and power to check the growth of this vile cuſtom, not by the force of their example to confirm it among the more ignorant and ſimple.

Had

Had they not accuſtomed themſelves to enforce their commands, or expreſs their paſſion in theſe horrid terms, their dependents would not have expected it from them; nor would they have had their example, by which to form their own practice. Speaking therefore from God's word, we affirm they muſt anſwer to God, not only for their own ſwearing, but alſo for all that impiety, which their example and influence have encouraged.

But it is not in fact true, that ſwearing will either get buſineſs well done, or frighten others from offending us. It confounds and hinders buſineſs, never helps it on; or if it performs any thing, it can only be eye ſervice; and far from preventing offence, it encourageth ridicule and contempt.

On this element, where, from I know not what reaſoning, oaths are conſidered as a neceſſary appendage to command, profeſſed ſwearers, inſtead of being feared, or readily obeyed, generally bring themſelves into contempt with the ſeamen, and may hear their com-

common oaths uſed often as a bye-word. That paſſion may even be bitterly expreſſed without oaths, is evident in the practice of the other ſex, (for as it luckily happens, ſwearing is a male offence) in which none but the moſt abandoned ever indulge themſelves in this habit; and yet it was never ſuppoſed, that they were therefore leſs able to ſhew reſentment, or enforce obedience.

If indeed, in our particular caſe, duty could not be carried on without ſwearing, the ſervice would be very unfit for any conſcientious man: and it would here follow, which happens in no other caſe, that God had preſcribed one branch of duty in direct oppoſition to another. We are commanded to honour our Creator; we are alſo commanded to ſerve and defend our country. But by this opinion, it is neceſſary for the execution of this laſt, that God be diſhonoured and affronted: but this is not the caſe where command is regularly and readily carried on: where obedience is quick and chearful, there we have no ſwearing:

ſwearing: nay, the ſervice always ſuffers, where ſwearing and paſſion mix with it.

Let a man acquire ſkill in his profeſſion, let him command prompt obedience by the propriety, the ſteadineſs of his orders, let him temper an even reſolute conduct with humanity, he will be chearfully and readily obeyed; the leaſt mark of his diſpleaſure will be a ſufficient puniſhment to the offender, the leaſt ſign of his diſapprobation will put him on correcting himſelf.

Indeed, with what propriety can a common ſwearer expect to be obeyed, when he himſelf thus flagrantly breaks through his firſt duty, his duty to God: or ſuppoſe his dependents not to carry their reaſoning on his conduct ſo far, yet how can they obey a man, who in the fury of his paſſion, iſſues out his orders, blended with curſing in ſuch a confuſed, confounding, and contradictory manner, that the poor objects of his rage neither underſtand what they ought to do, nor if they did underſtand, can they, for the dread and

trembling inſpired by the fear of the effects of his extravagant paſſion, execute the thing commanded? For if curſing affects the perſon to whom it is addreſſed, with dread it muſt confound; and if it has not this effect, it muſt fill him with contempt, from a reflection on the impotency and abſurdity of the paſſion.

If the offence which we mean to reſent, has been committed by an equal, there alſo ſwearing will be found an improper method of expreſſing indignation. The character of a common ſwearer is well known among his acquaintance: if they have diſobliged or affronted him, they are prepared to receive a volley of unmeaning oaths, and curſes, directed perhaps more againſt himſelf than them: while they are playing off, they ſtop their ears, ſometimes continue to provoke him, till he expoſes himſelf by ſome extravagant act, and then laugh in his face, crying, "are we not in ſport?" Their conduct is not ſuch to a reaſonable, ſteady man; they dread more one ſevere expreſſion from him, than all the imprecations that the other can rake from the

the loweſt hell: and it is but reaſonable that ſuch curſing ſhould loſe its aim; for when a man intreats God to curſe another, he acknowledges he wants power to avenge himſelf: and the puniſhment which he imprecates on the offender, is ſo much above the fault, that this can never ſuppoſe, that God will hear or anſwer him. In the mean time he omits thoſe expreſſions of reſentment, which are proper and actually in his power; as ſhewing the offender in a diſpaſſionate, cool manner, a ſenſibility of his injurious treatment, and taking meaſures againſt the repetition of ſuch improper freedoms.

From the enquiry carried thus far, we may conclude ſwearing to be an improper, an inadequate method of ſhewing reſentment, or of commanding obedience; and if it could really anſwer theſe ends, the cuſtom is ſo very ſinful, that it would be purchaſing them at too high a price.

I ſhould proceed in the diſcuſſion of the common pleas for ſwearing, but I wiſh not

to tire you out: I ſhall leave the proſecution of the ſubject till another opportunity. And this I propoſe, not more from a deſire of meeting fully this vile, and too univerſal a cuſtom, than to give you time for your own thoughts to operate. Reaſoning is chiefly wanted to ſet the mind at work. Left to its own reflections, it will ſeldom make wrong concluſions. May God's grace be with you in the preſent caſe. Amen.

SER-

SERMON VII.

On Swearing.

PART II.

EXOD. XX. 7.

Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

THE great enemy of mankind could not have invented a more effectual method of eraſing the impreſſions of religion from the minds of men, than this univerſal profanation of God's name, which ariſeth from common ſwearing. God is ſo familiarly addreſſed by theſe profeſſed ſwearers,

admitted ſo freely into all their amuſements and paſtimes, made ſo neceſſary a party in all impoſitions and frauds, ſo commonly produced to atteſt a falſhood, and confirm a jeſt, that they begin at length to think him ſuch an one as themſelves; a convenient being for the carrying on of mirth and deceit; not a king to be feared, not a governour, whoſe diſpleaſure is miſery, whoſe anger is annihilation.

Thus a reverence for God, the ſtrongeſt, the only effectual tie of religion is broken off: for when a man gets over the fear of God's diſpleaſure, and a regard for his favour, what ſtand can a few theoretical notions of morality make againſt ſenſuality or ſelfiſhneſs? When impiety has once burſt through this true mound of virtue, what have we to oppoſe to the overpowering deluge of iniquity, but that empty unmeaning word honour; which however it may affect actions to be done in the face of the ſun, did never yet, when disjoined from religion, correct one bad thought or vicious inclination?

We

We have obſerved that this crime of common ſwearing, though ſo fatal in its conſequences, was ſo unnatural, that he who reaſoned from man's conſtitution, and his relation to God, muſt conclude it to be impoſſible for it to have place in the world; but that he who argued from fact, muſt determine it to be an heroic qualification, neceſſary for carrying a man ſucceſsfully through life: for he would find parents ſometimes teaching it to their children, and rejoicing at every leſſon they caught in impiety; he would find ſervants making their court, by helping forward the young heir in this graceful qualification. He might obſerve too many of our guardians, both in the army and navy, ſhewing to a demonſtration, how little our country needs to fear its enemies, ſince defended by men, who dare to ſet God at defiance. He would ſee our taverns, places ſet apart to unbend the mind, ecchoing one to another the awful name, by way of exerciſe; and he would find it without ceremony, introduced by men, to expreſs paſſion, grief, joy, to enforce command, to ward off injury.

We determined this ſin to include every abuſe of God's name, attributes and revelation, but reſolved to treat chiefly of that crime which men commit, when on various pretences, they ſport with the name of God in common diſcourſe. We founded our reaſoning on that gratitude and eſteem, which our relation to God ought naturally to produce, which muſt reſpect every concern of our benefactor, which muſt abhor whatever could diſhonour or affront him.

But the diſhonouring of God's name is a charge not always anxiouſly denied: the common ſwearer thinks it innocent, and abounds in reaſons for the practice. Firſt, ſwearing is neceſſary to enforce obedience: but this was ſhewn to be a neceſſity of the man's own creating; for he firſt introduced this mode of expreſſing paſſion, and made inferiours look for oaths, as marks of hurry and earneſtneſs: and we hinted at the example of the other ſex, where paſſion, and even bitterneſs could be exceedingly well expreſſed without a ſingle oath. But indeed, if oaths anſwer this purpoſe,

poſe, they alſo impreſs dread, and produce confuſion; or more frequently, fill the hearers with contempt of the man's perſon, and neglect of his orders.

And this laſt is the general effect of common ſwearing, when uſed between equals as a mark of reſentment: it encourages injuries never prevents them; nay, hinders the man from ſhewing a proper ſenſibility of wrong, or taking meaſures to ward it off.

Others there are, who inſtead of defending, excuſe this practice, by ſaying they are ſenſible it is a ſin: but they have got ſo firmly into the habit, that they cannot ſhake it off. But I would aſk theſe people, were they certain to be ſtruck dead with the firſt oath they uttered, would they not keep a watch over their lips? Yet can death, which is natural to mankind, be compared with God's anger? For a common ſwearer may reſt aſſured, that if he ſhall die, without having ſincerely repented of his wickedneſs, he will meet a puniſhment a thouſand times more bitter than death,

death, even eternal deſtruction from that God, who hath been the object of his wanton mockery. Doth the frequent repetition of rebellion plead in favour of the traitor? Doth it not increaſe his guilt, and haſten his puniſhment? Will the law more readily overlook a confirmed known thief, than one who never before hath been convicted? Then (for the reaſoning in all the caſes is the ſame) will the frequent and habitual repetition of this daring ſin of inſolence and ingratitude, which profane ſwearing ſuppoſeth, leſſen the culprit's guilt before God?

If the profane ſwearer pleads that he acquired this habit in his tender years, that his parents, his relations, their ſervants encouraged and trained him up in the practice, before he knew it to be a ſin, we anſwer, it is a misfortune to be thus badly nurtured, and woe be to his profligate teachers. But if riper years, and confirmed reaſon give their ſanction to this wickedneſs, he takes the guilt on his own head, and muſt bear the puniſhment. If by a manly reſolution you had broken

through

through this impious habit, you would have done well, you would have deſerved praiſe. Therefore if you indolently perſevere in it, you muſt have demerit, you will deſerve puniſhment. For this is to neglect a neceſſary improvement,

If cuſtom may indeed be conſidered as a good excuſe for folly of any kind, there is no place left for virtuous exertions. Reaſon, which has been imparted to guide our ſteps, to direct and correct our conduct, becomes a uſeleſs, unprofitable gift. If a man hath found himſelf for a ſeries of years conſtantly afflicted with coughs, or agues, which have reduced his ſtrength, and even threaten his life; and he be informed by a perſon, of whoſe ſkill and veracity he is well convinced, that this ſtate of bad health proceeds from his living in low, ſwampy grounds; will he neglect to take the firſt opportunity of removing into better air, becauſe his diſorder is become habitual to him? Or if he remains, when it was in his power to remove, will his neighbours

bours pity him, when he falls under the diſeaſe?

But who ever knew any one of thoſe perſons who plead cuſtom for ſwearing, that ſeriouſly endeavoured to break it off, and failed in the attempt? We cannot however call that a *ſerious* attempt, where a man contents himſelf with ſaying, "God be merciful to me a ſinner," and ſets not heartily about the neceſſary work. Will man, a being but of yeſterday, a worm in the preſence of his Creator, pretend to affirm, that he hath ſtudied to fill his mind with that reverence and awe of God, which becomes the moſt exalted, as well as the loweſt of his creatures, while he uſeth his name with a levity, which he dares not ſhew to the moſt indifferent, the leaſt reſpected of all his acquaintances? If he pleads cuſtom for this defiance of his God and befactor, then hath the devil an excellent plea for all his wickedneſs; for, from the beginning of time, he hath been the father, the origin of iniquity.

Another

Another excuſe made for this crime is, that it is not really meant to abuſe God's holy name, but to uſe it as an expletive, to round off diſcourſe. But is not this, even by their own account, playing on the edge of a precipice? Words are ſo intimately connected with the things for which they ſtand, that it is impoſſible to ſeparate them: the one conſtantly ſuggeſts the other. If we make free with that word which expreſſeth the majeſty of our Creator, it will be impoſſible to preſerve a reverence for his power. But do we indeed treat our friends or patrons in this ſcurrilous, inſulting manner? Do we in any caſe uſe their names as a byeword? And if we do not this, where reſpect is due only in a low degree, why is our God, the fountain of all we poſſeſs, or hope for, to be leſs regarded? Every thing that hath but the moſt diſtant connexion with his exiſtence or power, ſhould command our reſpect. With what awe then, ſhould we utter a word, which ſuggeſts to our reflection his continual preſence, his ſtrict notice of our moſt indifferent actions, our moſt trifling words, our moſt ſecret thoughts? Indeed this

hath

hath ſo ſmall a pretence for being uſed as a plea, that like all other groſs abſurdities, little can be ſaid to expoſe it. We can only flatly contradict the aſſertion, and affirm it to be impoſſible for any one who is not an atheiſt from principle, to uſe the name of God as an expletive. If indeed, common ſwearers, when they ſay this, mean that they diſregard the God, with whoſe name they take ſuch liberties, we will believe them: and this is the very thing for which we cenſure them; the very ſin and folly, of which we wiſh to make them ſenſible.

But ſome are for compounding the matter, and alledging, that if uſing the name of God wantonly and profanely, be a ſin, then ſurely to take the like liberties with the devil, muſt be praiſe worthy. But who are the men, in whoſe lips the infernal ſounds of devil and damnation are moſt frequently to be found? Are they to be remarked for their veneration of God, and their reſpect to good things? We cannot affirm this. Railing is not a ſign of piety or virtue. The archangel, when contending

tending with the devil himſelf, was not permitted to bring againſt him a railing accuſation. But how can thoſe, who ſwear by this evil ſpirit, free themſelves from the imputation of ſerving him? If they mean in ſwearing by him to confirm an oath, either they muſt believe that he has power to puniſh a falſhood, or as more agreeable to his nature, that he will aſſiſt them in carrying on a fraud. But power belongeth only to God; and when we aſcribe it to any other being, we rob him of that honour which is his due only.

If this manner of ſwearing be uſed as an unmeaning ſupplement to phraſes, it renders hell, and the great adverſary of mankind, ſo familiar to the imagination, that in time, we become afraid neither of the wiles of the one, nor of the torments of the other. Thus we are put off our guard againſt temptations, and we have not the fear of puniſhment to deter us from vice, or excite us to virtue; a motive which, though decried by theoretical pretenders to virtue, has yet in every diſpenſation of his providence, been

adapted

adapted by God himſelf to our conſtitution, as creatures made up of ſoul and body, of reaſon and appetite.

Further, from a natural ſenſe of what is decent, we judge ſuch horrid imprecations unbecoming of a man, who entertains a proper ſenſe of his own dignity; for this will teach him never to utter any thing that will ſhock good manners, that at leaſt is not innocent. Converſation becoming reaſonable creatures is weighty, decent, grave: if it deſcends to eaſe, mirth, or raillery, it is not loud, it does not alarm, it gives not pain to any part of company.

We have driven the common ſwearer from every ordinary plea, and with a view to the ſervice, have particularly eſtabliſhed the inſufficiency of curſing, for carrying on command. Perhaps it may ſtill be neceſſary to mark its abſurdity, as uſed among you in the execution of orders. And my brethren, can any thing fill a ſober man with more amazement, than to hear a company of men, while ſtraining

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ing every nerve in ſome joint effort, curſing the God that infuſeth ſtrength into their arms, curſing their companions that aſſiſt in the work, their own perſons that are to be ſecured by it, begging the eternal God to blaſt them, when the leaſt jerk, the verieſt trifle, is ſufficient to hurry them into his preſence, with all their ſins about them? Could I in this hour of ſober reflection but paint you to yourſelves in the horrid act, you would condemn your conduct, you would deteſt yourſelves, and reſolve to offend no more.

But, though God be in general ſlow to puniſh, ſtill from time to time, he vindicates his government of mankind. Few of you but can recollect, or have heard ſome well atteſted inſtance, where the curſes of the blaſphemer have lighted on his own head, in a manner that marked the avenging hand. But what fell under your notice, was not the puniſhment, but the call to judgment. Your employment here is important; your buſineſs is of no leſs conſequence than the welfare of your country. It ſhould then be managed

ſoberly, and care ſhould be taken, not to provoke the anger of God to counteract it, but to obtain his favour to bring it to an happy iſſue.

We ſhould now examine more particularly, the ſinfulneſs of this practice of common ſwearing. But not to tire you out, and to give you full time to conſider the ſubject in proportion to its importance (for as I have already ſaid, I mean only to direct your thoughts in the enquiry) I ſhall leave the further diſcuſſion of it to another occaſion, in hopes that your good ſenſe will accompany me in the view.

Let me intreat you to employ your own reaſon in the mean time, in ſearching out the abſurdity, the folly, the criminality of the practice. God is a jealous God: his mercy is held out to every repenting ſinner; but he will not paſs by an affront done to his Majeſty, either through careleſſneſs, or through profligacy. To be allowed to honour and love him, is the greateſt exaltation

of

of our nature; but how can we love, or honour that God, whoſe name we make the ordinary ſport of our unthinking hours?

The true cauſe of ſwearing is an inſenſibility of our neceſſary dependence on God, and a want of that reverence which we owe to him. But will God continue to heap bleſſings on the man who perſeveres in neglecting, deſpiſing, inſulting him? Or if he allow the offender to ſhare in the bleſſings of life, without cauſing vengeance to overtake him, will he alſo perſiſt in making happy in heaven the man, who has ſearched out opportunities of uſing his holy name with the moſt inſolent freedom; who has ſolemnly invoked him to witneſs the moſt falſe, the moſt infamous things; who has mixed with the moſt childiſh trifles, that name at which heaven and earth tremble? Heaven of itſelf would reject him. He of himſelf would ſhrink back from its purity, from its glory, to take ſhelter in thoſe diſmal regions, thoſe habitations of woe, which are the natural ſoil of blaſphemy and deſpair.

May God, in his mercy, ſhew the workers of this iniquity, their danger before it be too late: may they learn to fear that powerful being, who only by withdrawing his ſupporting hand, muſt reduce them to nothing: and may we all be accepted of him, through the merits and mediation of his only Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

On Common Swearing.

PART III.

EXOD. XX. 7.

Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

WE have gone through, at ſome length, the pleas which men commonly make for abuſing their Creator's name. And however inconſiderate men may think to gloſs over the inſult levelled by it againſt Heaven, I hope none have heard me without having been convinced, that thoſe pleas are falſe and inconcluſive. Did men examine their own

hearts, they would find that they firſt committed the ſin, and then ſearched for ſomething to excuſe the inſenſibility and careleſsneſs from which it proceeded. In order to check the progreſs of this impiety, it will be neceſſary to bring us to a ſenſe of our relation to God; and this we will endeavour to do, by giving a view of the man in this act of waging war againſt Heaven, and making proper reflections on the awful Being who is thus oppoſed.

Obſerve then this ſon of earth, working himſelf up in the madneſs of his paſſion, while all around ſhudder with horror, and ſhrink back in diſmay! And no wonder; for it is hell and damnation that he flings with might all around him. Should one of his curſes light on its ill-fated object, it would ſink him to the loweſt pit. But what terrour doth he impreſs, when he riſeth to the daring of God himſelf? Who can think of the impieties uttered by him, without looking around as if to explore a way, by which to eſcape the deſtruction

deſtruction ready to be poured from heaven on every creature near him?

"Whence ſprung this ſon of terrour? What is his power? Is it laſting?" A few days ago, a weakly puling infant in his nurſe's arms, living in her ſmile, trembling at her frown, unable to feed or tend himſelf, he owed every thing to her care. Though now this mighty man ſeems to beſtride the world like a Coloſſus, but lately he was obliged to creep on all four.—"Perhaps he may continue to grow in ſtrength, and increaſe in power."—No,—attend him a few days hence, you will ſee him confined to a narrow bed, under the anguiſh of a burning fever. That hand now lifted up againſt heaven, you will find unable to wipe the cold ſweat from his brow: thoſe lips now opened to hurl defiance at heaven, you will ſee trembling, and quivering, while they drawl out, "give me a drop of water to cool this flame." How is he fallen! Thoſe eyes that darted fury on all around, are dead and ſunk back in their ſockets. Thoſe limbs that ſeemed juſt

ſtarting to ſcale heaven, how nerveleſs, how relaxed do they lie! But this is comfort and peace, compared with the horrors of his mind. What agony harrows up the ſoul, when ſhe reflects, that a few moments more, and ſhe appears before her Creator, covered with the ſhame, loaded with the guilt of rebellion? With what humility would the man now addreſs that God, who hath been the object of his wanton inſult, did not deſpair forbid the hopes of forgiveneſs? Annihilation, abhorrent as it is to nature, would now be a bleſſing; but divine juſtice oppoſeth the fond, though wretched wiſh. Tortured with anguiſh, torn with deſpair, he ſinks under the terrours of that Judge, whom he hath curſed in his folly a thouſand and a thouſand times. So ends the man, who openly dares the Majeſty of heaven. May we never be able to judge of his feelings, may we never know his ſufferings!

The object of the blaſphemer's inſult and ribaldry is the Creator of heaven and earth, who gave the man exiſtence, and all its bleſ-

ſings,

ſings, and all its hopes, and all its proſpects. He is a pure Being wrapped up in majeſty, and only regardeth thoſe who are pure in heart, and holy in converſation: his power requires reverence, his goodneſs claims gratitude, to be expreſſed by every poſſible mode of reſpect for, and attachment to his name, his word, his worſhip, his ſacraments.

But he would not leave this neceſſary part of our duty, reverence to his name, to the concluſions of reaſon: he hath poſitively forbidden the profanation of his name, and declared, that he will not hold him guiltleſs who taketh his name in vain. Who then is wiſer than God, to ſay it is not a ſin? Who is ſtronger than he, to ſay he ſhall not puniſh? No plea will, can be heard in abatement of this threat; as he is a God able to reward, ſo is he mighty to puniſh. An inſult is ever eſtimated by the rank of the perſon affronted. Infinite then muſt be the guilt, when beings of a day dare to inſult the majeſty of God, and intolerable their puniſhment.

But

But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe who dare to impeach God's veracity, who invoke him to witneſs a lie, and give his ſanction to falſhood? If vengeance be not immediately executed on the ſpot, it is ſuſpended only to fall on them with redoubled violence. Still theſe crimes reſpect our own perſons. What depravity do we expreſs, when we imprecate curſes on our brother's head! We are bid to aſſiſt each other with our prayers, and to make ſupplication for all men. How wickedly then do we act, when we turn our bleſſings to curſes, and pray for damnation to thoſe, for whom Chriſt died! If they produce any effect, it muſt be deſtruction on our own head.

Now, in order to avoid the ſeveral degrees of this heinous ſin of ſwearing, let us impreſs our minds with an habitual awe and reverence for God, as that holy and good Being, to whom we owe life, enjoyment, hope. Surely if we accuſtom ourſelves to ſuch thoughts, if we are at all times ſenſible how much we ſtand indebted to his bounty, we

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ſhall, in a particular manner, be filled with grateful reverence, when we think of him, or mention his name. Inſtead of joining it with childiſh trifles, with worthleſs lies, perjuries, or frauds, we ſhall call home our ſcattered thoughts, and ſtand collected in ourſelves, when we offer up the incenſe of our lips, when we invoke his power, or appeal to his knowledge; and when we further conſider that God is ever preſent with us, remarking with an eye to judgment, our thoughts, words, and actions, this regard for his name will become ſtill more an habit, and be a check, that we offend not with our tongue.

When we receive any favour from men, which ſhews their kindneſs and regard for our intereſt, we never approach their preſence, but with unaffected reſpect; their name is never mentioned before us, without recalling every obligation. If any perſon makes free with their character, we defend it with all our might. Now God is our beſt, our conſtant benefactor, and we are always in his preſence: let us at leaſt treat him no worſe than

than we do men, to whom we owe temporal good offices.

Conſider, this practice of profane ſwearing will teach you by degrees to think lightly even of the moſt ſolemn oath. How can you be properly affected in calling God to witneſs the moſt ſerious truth, when you have been accuſtomed to uſe his holy name on every baſe, or ſilly occaſion? Beware, leſt you be inſenſibly led into the vileſt perjury; a crime ignominious before men, and of the blackeſt guilt before God. In the ſervice of your country, you lie not ſo open to this temptation; but in the merchant ſervice, where there are many appeals to juſtice in diſputes between maſters and their people, I fear the frequency of common ſwearing among ſeamen is but too apt to warp their teſtimony, in endeavouring to avenge their wrongs, imaginary or real: and as common ſwearing has too generally this bad effect on your own minds, ſo does it too often make you an example of evil to all around you, in proportion to your ſtation: the young learn to imitate you, and

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ſoon get beyond you: your equals ſuſpect your regard for truth: they play off the ſuſpected fraud on you in return, and become what they only ſuppoſe you to be, cheats and deceivers.

Let the men, who wiſh to be conſidered as better than the loweſt of the people, reflect on the meanneſs and vulgarity of the crime: and ſurely if they deſire to be eſteemed, and know what is due to their condition, they will not practiſe it. Let ſuch men try to be ever ſo profane and ſhocking in their imprecations, the loweſt of the vulgar ſhall get many degrees beyond them in impiety and blaſphemy. Theſe laſt have no ſentiment, no prejudice of education, to cramp their genius for ſwearing; they feel no remorſe, and therefore go every length. But the man of better education and nicer notions, muſt feel frequent checks from conſcience, while practiſing in blaſphemy, which will prevent him from ever acquiring a perfect reliſh for it, or making a diſtinguiſhed progreſs in it. Let him then

then give over a conteſt, in which he muſt be inferior to the moſt deſpicable of mankind.

Obſerve the different reception, that the ſwearing humorous man, as he is called, meets with from company, and the chearful, ſenſible companion, who is chaſte in his converſation. The firſt indeed is ſometimes well received; but for what end? to furniſh ſport, to raiſe mirth from a dreadful trifling with ſacred things. The other is received with pleaſure, and alſo with reſpect. If he be diſpoſed to manly mirth, and chearfulneſs, all about him quickly catch the ſocial flame: if to be ſerious, they hang with delight on his lips for inſtruction and improvement. Can you heſitate in deciding between exciting laughter, by playing the impious buffoon, and creating eſteem by a manly behaviour, and decent converſation? It is related of Boyle, that ſuch was his habitual reverence for God, that he never mentioned his name without a ſenſible pauſe in his diſcourſe. Would it not add to our merit, to imitate his example? It is equally our duty. It is well pleaſing to God,

God, and is followed with truſt and confidence from men.

Conſider how the character of a common ſwearer hurts a man's credit in the world: his neighbour dares not mention a common occurrence from his report: he doubts of the degree of credit due to what he aſſerts with an oath: no man can rely on his punctuality in buſineſs, nor depend on his offers of ſervice, becauſe he hath no tie on him: for the word honour, which ſuch men would fain appropriate to themſelves, becauſe they conſtantly repeat it, can have little influence on thoſe, who feel not the dignity of their nature, and have caſt off their dependence on their God.

If paſſion cauſe you to ſwear, conſider what advantage your enemy draws from it. Argue calmly and cooly; if you be in the wrong, you leave room for conviction: if you be in the right, you can purſue your advantage: if you curſe your brother, conſider how grievous the puniſhment meant for, perhaps, a ſlight offence. If heaven were as ready to diſpenſe

diſpenſe damnation, as men are to pray indiſcriminately for it, they, and their adverſaries had long ago been hurled into hell.

In your caſe, my brethren, conſider that your ſituation is naturally dangerous, and that there is need, not to ſtir up God's anger, but to conciliate his favour, that you may reach ſecurity and ſucceſs. Can you curſe, or wiſh ill to your companions, who aſſiſt you in gaining theſe purpoſes? Can you wiſh damnation to yourſelves, when the aim of your lives is eaſe and happineſs?

Upon the whole, can you reflect on the infinite diſtance between you and God, and take theſe inſolent liberties with his name? Can you reflect on what you owe to his goodneſs, and treat your Protector and Preſerver with mockery and contempt? Will you ſo diſregard your own intereſt, as to provoke him, in whoſe hands are heaven and hell, who diſpenſeth to the world puniſhments and rewards? Will you plead a haſty, perhaps an ill founded paſſion, for thus abuſing his name?

God

God hath not offended you; why affront him? It is your brother, one towards whom you are equally often in fault. Tell him his offence calmly, he will make you reparation. If he proves obſtinate by your meekneſs, you have made heaven your avenger. Your enemy will not eſcape puniſhment.

But this mighty hurry of paſſion, perhaps, is wholly a miſtake of your own ſickly fancy. Conſider the conſequences. By your peeviſh humour you have eſtranged a kind, obliging neighbour, or exaſperated a faithful ſervant; and in doing this, you have made an enemy of him, who alone can befriend you.

Will you plead a habit of ſwearing? The longer a diſeaſe continues in the body, the more loathſome that body becomes. Is it otherwiſe with the ſoul? and doth a perſeveverance in evil habits not make her more depraved, and therefore more deteſtable in the ſight of God? This plea of cuſtom is the devil's cunning, to detain men under the dominion of ſin: but at the laſt day, when the

thoughts of all hearts ſhall be laid open, it will be aſked for what purpoſe were reaſon and reſolution implanted in the mind, if headlong paſſion was not to be checked, if the man was not to conduct himſelf by their ſober dictates.

Swearing is a ſin, in which no pleaſure, no ſatisfaction can be pretended: in it men devote themſelves to God's wrath, without propoſing even a ſhadow in return. Our Saviour ſuppoſeth the whole world to be but a poor exchange for a loſt ſoul; but the common ſwearer hath not even the leaſt part of that into his bargain.

At the day of judgment we muſt give an account of every idle word ſpoken by us. What a dreadful account muſt he give, who hath wantonly, and profanely uſed that name, at which heaven and earth tremble! And as God hath expreſſly declared he will not hold him guiltleſs, his veracity is engaged to puniſh the injury done to his Majeſty.

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I am perſuaded, that thoſe who are guilty of this crime, have never conſidered it as an act of inſult and rebellion againſt God: but the diſcovery is ſo eaſily made, that ignorance of it will be conſidered as wilful. It is not difficult to find out, that a worm of the earth ought to humble himſelf before the Lord of the univerſe. Or if this ſhould be beyond your comprehenſion, will not gratitude teach you a leſſon of reſpect to your benefactor and preſerver?

You cannot pretend that you curſe God, becauſe you are above the fear of his wrath; for ſuch is the diſtance between you, that he cannot be an object of your courage and manhood. He would be a mad, not a brave man, who ſhould oppoſe himſelf to a rock, rolling down a precipice. What muſt he be, who ſets his face againſt the terrours of the Almighty? Soon you muſt appear before God, ſtripped of all this ſuperficial intrepidity, with all the gaudy colouring of impious jeſting faded, the mind ulcerated, conſcience anticipating its doom. Then all the pleas of

early habit, intolerable provocation, harmleſs expletives, will vaniſh into nothing, and in their room will ſtart up open rebellion, daring impiety, and wanton contempt. Repent then of your folly in time, and pray to God, that he may ſhed abroad his grace in your hearts, and inſpire you with a true love and reverence for him, through Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

SER-

VIEW

OF

MAN's DUTY:

IN SIX

DISCOURSES.

VIEW

OF

MAN'S DUTY:

IN SIX

DISCOURSES.

SERMON IX.

Of the Value of the Soul.

Matth. vii. 21.

Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

IT is my wiſh, brethren, to impreſs ſtrongly on your minds a ſenſe of your connection with another life after this, and to ſhew how much your happineſs in that life depends on your conduct here, both as men, and ſervants of your country. And this I ſhall attempt

by laying before you the extent of your duty, as it ariſeth out of the faculties with which you are endowed, and the ſituation in which you are placed.

The general concluſion, that we are made for futurity, I might leave to the witneſs in your own breaſts. Conſcience, while ſtamping a character on our actions, tells every reflecting man that there is a God, and that he judgeth the heart, and ſearcheth out the underſtanding, and will render to every man according to his works; vengeance to whom vengeance, honour to whom honour is due. But experience will inform him, that this preſent ſtate of things is not the ſcene of judgment; for here God ſendeth his rain equally on the juſt, and on the unjuſt; or diſtributes the good things of this life promiſcuouſly to the wicked, and to the righteous. And yet if God be juſt, (and that he is juſt, is as true as that he exiſts) things will not finally be ſo; for the wicked ſhall not go unpuniſhed, nor the righteous without the reward of his patience.

This

This chain of reaſoning, this condition of things, naturally lead us to a ſtate after this, where virtue and vice will be ſeparated, where God will be glorified in his judgments, where every being that has ſought after happineſs, in the way in which God hath commanded, will be made completely bleſſed, where he, who hath made himſelf unworthy of God's favour, by debaſing his nature, will be turned out of the circle of happineſs, to inhabit the regions of darkneſs and deſpair,

You are then, my brethren, deſigned for another life after this, for a glorious immortality, if you be not wanting to yourſelves. And are you deſtined for ſuch a ſtate, for a happy eternity in God's preſence, and feel you not every faculty, every wiſh put forth to ſeize the inheritance? The higheſt enjoyments of this life can be of little conſequence to him, who extends his views to eternity. If this world, and the things thereof give him concern, it is how he may ſo uſe them, or paſs through them, as to attain the future object of his wiſhes. In this ſenſe, and in this

this ſenſe only, are the things of this life of conſequence.

We are here aſſembled together in one body, to carry on the ſervice of our country. Our eating and ſleeping, the agreeableneſs or diſagreeableneſs of our preſent feelings, are trifling conſiderations, when put in the balance with her intereſt. We ourſelves readily ſuffer hunger, thirſt, wearineſs, when her cauſe demands the ſacrifice. But when we conſider our perſonal feelings, and public ſervices as connected together, and both with a conduct on which eternal happineſs depends, they acquire a new value. What conſidered by itſelf, was trifling, becomes important; what was of conſequence as it reſpected others, by fixing a character on our conduct, becomes ineſtimable. We are careful of ourſelves, that we may do our country better ſervice; we ſerve our country, that we may gain God's approbation and happineſs in heaven. Thus viewing ourſelves as the creatures of God's goodneſs, and through the death and merits of his Son our Saviour, heirs of everlaſting happineſs,

pineſs, we become ſenſible of our dignity, and in every circumſtance, feel and act like candidates for heaven: therefore that line of conduct on which futurity depends, is an object of enquiry well worth all the pains we can take about it.

In the paſſage now read, our Saviour tells us, that if we would enter into heaven, we muſt do the will of his, and our Father which is in heaven. Or, in other words, if we wiſh to inherit the happineſs adapted to our nature, and actually prepared for us, we muſt comply with the conditions preſcribed by the author of our nature, and the giver of our happineſs. Now, the conditions or duty thus required of us, riſes immediately out of our nature, and our relation to the beings around us. Firſt, we are the workmanſhip of a good God: as ſuch we muſt reſpect his power, we muſt love his goodneſs. Secondly, as his creatures, he hath beſtowed on us a nature capable of improvement, capable of advancement in happineſs: therefore, to gain this knowledge, and be capable of this happineſs

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adapted to us, we muſt train our faculties in the exerciſes and habits that lead to them. Thirdly, we are intended to live with our brother in ſociety, and to draw all the advantages of the ſtate from mutual good offices and aſſiſtance: this ſituation ſuppoſeth a ſenſe of juſtice and benevolence, varying in its operations, according to the various relations in which we ſtand to ſociety. But to us who are employed in the public ſervice, in addition to the general duty to our neighbour, it preſcribes obligations reſpecting that ſervice, and a particular tenour of conduct ariſing out of it.

From a comprehenſive view of theſe ſeveral branches of our duty, and a reflection on the weakneſs of our powers, and the ſinfulneſs of our beſt performances, it will immediately occur to us, that of ourſelves we cannot do the things expected of us, unleſs God, by his ſpecial grace, ſtrengthen and aſſiſt us. This circumſtance puts our duty in a new light, and obligeth us to ſearch out, how we are to give ourſelves a title to God's grace, or by what

what means we may obtain ſtrength in the inner man. Here Chriſtianity, or the religion of Jeſus, comes into our aid, holding out ſupport to our weakneſs, information to our ignorance, and pardon to our offences.

We ſhall therefore conſider our duty, the duty which we muſt perform, if we wiſh to inherit the kingdom of heaven, as it reſpects God our Creator, ourſelves as made for a certain purpoſe, our neighbour as related to us, our country, as the field of our activity, and faith in Jeſus Chriſt, as the means given unto us of improving and perfecting ourſelves in its ſeveral branches, thus ariſing from our nature, thus connected with our expectations.

That we may be enabled to conſider this duty in proportion to its real importance, we ſhall preface this diſcuſſion of it with a ſhort enquiry into the worth of the human ſoul, or that part of our conſtitution, by which we become accountable for our duty, and capable of the happineſs affixed to the due performance of it.

Now

Now our ſouls are that part of us, which God condeſcended to make in his own likeneſs, and to which he was pleaſed to impart certain portions of heavenly reaſon and goodneſs, by the improvement of which we might become objects of his regard, and deſerve his approbation. Now to have God for its author, and his approbation for its object, fixes a particular value on our ſoul, and obligeth us to be careful that its powers be not darkened nor debaſed by any improper or unworthy conduct.

Particularly our capacity for improvement is a talent beſtowed on us, to be employed with a view to the extenſion of our final happineſs: it is therefore only properly employed, when it is exerciſed in preparing us for that ultimate ſtate of happineſs, for which God intended us. All other creatures are carried by the neceſſity of their nature to their proper perfection and happineſs. To man alone is communicated the privilege of advancing himſelf, and of purchaſing happineſs by his efforts in virtue: and this engages

him by every noble, and every advantageous tie, to exert his abilities, that he may not prove wanting to himſelf, by diſappointing the gracious views of his Creator, ſo as to come ſhort of that happineſs for which his Maker intends him. A man impreſſed with proper notions of his own dignity, and of the perfection and happineſs of which his nature is capable, will no more drown his heavenly faculties in ſenſual indulgencies, than the heir of a princely fortune will abandon the elegancies annexed to his high condition, to live on ſcraps with the beggars that are fed from his table.

For ſuppoſe a man to take the oppoſite ſide, to employ that time and thoſe talents in the indulgence of ſenſuality, which were given him to improve and fit himſelf for ſpiritual happineſs in Heaven: as ſoon as he abandons himſelf to any low vice, he finds himſelf filled with loathing and diſguſt. He wanders from one object of deſire to another, and finds in all vanity and emptineſs. His deſires vary; they become contradictory, and

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pant after the moſt incompatible objects. From noiſe, from buſtle, and debauchery, they change through all the riot of boiling paſſions, through all the reſtleſſneſs of ambition, and at length ſink down into the plodding arts of gain, into the contracted littleneſs of avarice. In every varied object he can find no quiet, he meets with no ſatisfaction: his ſenſes are blunted, his powers are impaired: he ſinks into his primitive earth, abhorring himſelf, diſſatisfied with every body near him, and ſhrinking from the proſpect beyond the grave.

The man therefore who neglects the care of his ſoul, has neither preſent enjoyment nor future proſpect. His conduct is the death of preſent pleaſure, and renders him abſolutely incapable of every hope. He feels not the applauſe of his own conſcience, he looks not out for the eſteem of good men, and he muſt for ever deſpair of the approbation of God. Let us then only value the ſoul, by what we loſe in neglecting it, and its worth cannot be eſtimated.

Of

Of the things of this life we value each in proportion to its being laſting and uſeful. But the ſoul is in the higheſt degree laſting, and ſtamps on man his only merit. By permiſſion of its Creator it partakes of an eternal exiſtence; and by it alone man becomes an improveable being, and as ſuch an object of rational happineſs. It is therefore that part of our conſtitution, which is truly worthy of our attention. The bodily powers and deſires are placed in ſubordination to this better part, and our trial, or our merit here, is connected with the due government and regulation of them. We then act the moſt fooliſh part, when we invert this order of things, when we ſubject to the controul of paſſion that reaſon which God meant ſhould be inveſted with the command; for we counteract God's gracious intentions towards us to our own deſtruction.

But ſhould a want of ambition in what reſpects our own advancement, ſhould our dulneſs of comprehenſion hinder us from ſeeing the value and importance of our own

ſouls, conſider them as the workmanſhip of God's goodneſs, as the object of a Saviour's humiliation, and tell me if you can deſpiſe or neglect them. Shall God condeſcend to endue us with ſo valuable a gift, to create us capable of endleſs happineſs? Shall the Son of God leave the boſom of his Father, come down to dwell among men, and ſubmit to every want, to every injury, at laſt to death itſelf, to redeem us from death, and reſtore us to happineſs? And ſhall we mock at all this condeſcending love, and ſpitefully ſnatch at ruin? This would be ſuch a mixture of wilfulneſs, inſenſibility, and ingratitude, as exceeds deſcription, and from its abſurdity is incapable of confutation.

Or ſuppoſe that this inſenſibility of God's goodneſs, and Chriſt's love, does really poſſeſs us; have we conſidered the conſequences? And when we reſolved to caſt behind us the improvement and happineſs of all that was valuable in our conſtitution, have we alſo weighed our ſtrength to endure the puniſhment of diſobedience? The God who created

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us for happineſs, the Saviour who died for our redemption, will have their loving kindneſs indulged by your ſalvation, or their juſtice ſatisfied by the puniſhment of your wickedneſs. The goodneſs of God, the loving kindneſs of your Saviour, are not to be trifled with. It was the happineſs of his creatures, that God intended by their creation; it was their reſtoration to a capacity for that happineſs, after they had caſt it from them by their guilt and folly, that brought Chriſt down from heaven to ſuffer on the croſs.

If we follow virtue, if we render ourſelves obedient to the goſpel, we anſwer God's gracious purpoſes with us, we fix our Saviour's love, we ſecure his mediation; but if through our folly or obſtinacy, God's goodneſs influencing his power, our Saviour's love directing his humiliation, ſhould both fail in making us worthy of heaven, we ſhall not therefore be permitted to continue to diſturb the happineſs, or deface the beauty of creation. Whatever diſfigures, whatever troubles, whatever is incorrigibly bad, will be

turned out of the company of the bleſſed into hell, there to dwell with the devil and his angels, far from the face and favour of God. Attend then to your true intereſt, care for your ſouls, reſpect their high original, their laſting worth, their noble inheritance. Do the will of your Father which is in heaven, if you wiſh to be accepted by him, and to enter into his joy.

In ſpeaking thus of the value of the ſoul, I addreſs men endued with ſouls, ſouls that are precious in God's ſight. God's creatures are all equally dear to him; and he values them not by their rank in life, but by their intrinſic goodneſs. This world is not your inheritance, but the place of your probation. The character in which you act is of little, but your manner of acting is of the utmoſt importance. If it be approved of, an eternity of happineſs is laid up for you: nay, if there be any inconveniency and diſadvantage naturally attached to your ſituation in life, God's goodneſs is engaged to make up the inequality: therefore deſpiſe not your ſouls becauſe you

you are not numbered among the great and mighty, but care for and cultivate them, as that part which puts you on a level with kings, and by the improvement of which you may riſe infinitely above them.

Bear this in mind, your ſouls are precious; for God made, and Chriſt died to redeem them. They were made for eternity, and God hath promiſed to confer a happy one on the worthy, through the merits of his Son. They are made capable of improvement, capable of an endleſs progreſs in virtue and happineſs. Loſe them not then in ſenſual or ambitious purſuits. By a ſober and religious life, by a peaceable and charitable demeanour, by a faithful diſcharge of your duty to your country, cooperate with your God and your Saviour, in perfecting a felicity for which you were intended; ſet your minds to virtue, direct your actions to a bleſſed immortality.

And may a gracious God infuſe his grace into your hearts, to live that ſober, righteous, and godly life here, which is appointed as the only road to the ſalvation that Chriſt hath purchaſed for you hereafter by his death. To him be glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON X.

DUTY TO GOD.

1 CHRON. xxviii. 9.

Know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.

THE duties of religion, which it is the charge of a chriſtian preacher to enforce, ſuppoſe man to be a reaſonable, improveable creature, placed here in a ſtate of trial, and if he ſtands the teſt, intended for unſpeakable happineſs in heaven hereafter. By his reaſonable faculties he becomes capable of advancement in knowledge and virtue; and this knowledge and virtue properly purſued,

ſued, give him a title to the purpoſe of his creation, an eternal happineſs in God's preſence.

In the preceding diſcourſe I endeavoured to impreſs you with a due ſenſe of the importance of your ſouls, that part of your conſtitution by which you are connected with futurity. And this I endeavoured to effect, by cauſing you to view them as the workmanſhip and image of God, as that which ſtampt a value on the whole man, made him capable of virtue, extended his views to another ſtate, and by the ſufferings which Chriſt endured for them on the croſs gave us a title to the kingdom of heaven.

I obſerved that our duty ſprung naturally out of our relative ſituation, as creatures of a good God, intended, through our own exertion, to fill up a particular place in this and the next world.

The firſt and principal branch of our duty ariſes out of our relation to God, our Creator. He

He made us capable of improvement and virtue here, that we might become capable of happineſs hereafter. Our duty to God conſiſts then in gratitude and obedience.

We muſt inquire out God's will, that we may comply with it. We muſt meditate on his goodneſs, that we may adore him for it. This diſtinguiſheth our duty to God into two branches, reſignation and piety: by the firſt we model our lives according to his commandments, and chearfully ſubmit ourſelves to the diſpenſations of his Providence; by the ſecond we revere him for his holineſs and power, and adore him for his loving kindneſs and tender mercies.

Now the will of God muſt reſpect every part of our duty: for he being the author of our nature, and the obſerver and rewarder of our virtue, whatever is our duty can be binding on us, only becauſe he hath fitted us for it, and enjoined us to perform it. The will of God, either expreſſed in the conſtitution of his creatures, or declared in the revelation

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of himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, is therefore the foundation of all morality, becauſe we become moral agents, only in conſequence of the faculties with which he hath endowed us, and the promiſes which he hath condeſcended to make us.

Virtue therefore, however beautiful or attractive, is not barely a fine notion, or an elegant ſpeculation, which the learned may praiſe, the gay deſpiſe, and the artful pervert as they pleaſe. It is the edict of a great lawgiver, the will of a great king, a compliance with which leads to his favour, in which everlaſting life is bound up, a diſobedience to which is fenced round with his diſpleaſure, and never-ending puniſhment. Here then is the moſt binding ſanction to virtue and a good life: it has God for its author, it carries heaven in its right hand for its portion, and holds before it in its left hell torments to guard it from pollution.

In this light virtue cannot be conſidered as a voluntary or an indifferent thing, but by

the man to whom the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell are equal and indifferent. Virtue ariſeth from, and is interwoven with our conſtitution; nor can we abandon or think lightly of it, unleſs we alſo deſpiſe, or reſolve to ruin and deſtroy the whole man.

Therefore our duty to God obligeth us to the ſincere performance of every other branch of our duty, becauſe he is the author of the whole, and has engaged his veracity to ſee it all equally performed, or the tranſgreſſor puniſhed. At preſent we ſhall conſider this duty, as it has God for its object.

Now when we have found out what are God's intentions reſpecting us, we are to purſue diligently the tenor of them, and chearfully ſubmit to all the preſent inconveniencies and difficulties that attend a compliance with them. A ſtate of trial and progreſſive improvement, as this life undoubtedly is, muſt be thick ſown with hardſhips and obſtacles, that our merit may appear in our patient, reſolute manner of combating them.

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When the miſeries or ills of life bear hard on us, or ſeem ready to cruſh us, we muſt retire into our own minds, and there examine what miſconduct brought them on, or for what purpoſe of correction and improvement they have been commiſſioned. When we have made the diſcovery, we are heartily to ſet about amending what has been amiſs, and acquiring whatever knowledge or good quality may be found wanting. God doth not willingly puniſh, nor hath he pleaſure in afflicting the children of men. When we therefore are troubled or afflicted, we muſt conſider ourſelves as chaſtened, and kiſs the rod, reſolving, by God's grace, to deſerve it no more. If evil overtake us we muſt ſubmit, and receive it as from God's hands, who will either deliver us from, or ſupport us under temptation; who will give us a way to eſcape if we behave properly under it, or recompenſe the loſs with ſome more valuable bleſſing in return. By this patient, prudent conduct, we can turn chaſtiſement into mercy; and none of us have been ſo little the objects of God's peculiar care, but may

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with gratitude remark, how often an accident, that on its approach we dreaded as the greateſt evil, has turned out a link of a chain of bleſſings to us. This to the reſigned chriſtian will generally be the caſe, even in matters that reſpect this life; but will univerſally hold, without a ſingle exception, when the other world is brought into account. And ſuppoſing, which is not the caſe, that the evils which are ſent to make us think on our ways, and correct our conduct, were never in one inſtance recompenſed by other or more valuable bleſſings in this life; yet if working by patience and recollection they prepare and fit us for happineſs in futurity, and from our proper conduct under them, actually draw after them that future happineſs, what compariſon can we make between things on the one ſide ſo fleeting and tranſitory, on the other ſo laſting and important? The greateſt evils that can befal us in this world muſt be endured with chearfulneſs, when we know that by them we work out an eternity of glory. They become a peculiar mode of diſcipline,

cipline, to perfect our nature, and extend our capacity for happineſs.

To murmur at God's diſpenſations is to ſet up ourſelves as enemies to his Providence. We cannot fulfil his gracious intentions in them, the correction and improvement of our lives, but we oppoſe and contradict them, while we continue obſtinately in our evil courſes, and thus, to our own extreme ruin, provoke God to anger. For when through the ſinner's obſtinacy in folly God cannot correct or reform the evil of his ways by his judgments, he then lets looſe the inſtruments of his wrath, to root up and to deſtroy, that ſin may not continue to deface the beauty of his creation.

It is therefore being equally reſpectful towards God, and prudent towards ourſelves, carefully to ſearch out God's will, that we may comply with it, and chearfully to ſubmit to his correction, that it may have its proper effect of leading us on to perfection.

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When we attend to the friendly deſign of God's dealing with us, which is, that we may improve and frame our lives according to his will, we are naturally led a ſtep farther to the reſpectful uſe of every expreſſion, and pious performance of every act, by which we can ſhew our gratitude to him, or reverence for him. Indeed reverence for his power, and thankfulneſs for his mercies, muſt ever accompany a reflection on works, where power is only uſed to expreſs goodneſs, goodneſs is employed in directing power. And can man in any manner be ſo highly ennobled as in this, in having not barely a permiſſion, but an invitation to ſearch out the goodneſs of God's works, that he may adore and praiſe his Creator for them, and render himſelf worthy of being made happy in the poſſeſſion of them? In one reſpect this makes man a judge of divine excellence. We ſhew that we have cheriſhed the heavenly ſpark within us, when we feel a ſatisfaction in the diſplay of God's holineſs and perfections. Here then we have the foundation of thankſgiving and prayer.

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And as God's bleſſings and the benevolence of his works equally reſpect man as he is an individual, and as he is a member of ſociety, the propriety of our joining in a ſocial or common worſhip appears plain and convincing. We cannot think of God's goodneſs, that is, of any of his works, but we muſt thank him in our hearts for that condeſcending benevolence which directed his wiſdom thus to conſult our happineſs, and muſt reſolve to expreſs our ſenſe of them by the uprightneſs of our lives: and the ſame reflections will make us join with our brethren in public worſhip, to acknowledge his loving kindneſs to man in general, in which our happineſs is bound up, to expreſs our tie of brotherhood, and by our joint earneſtneſs to draw down bleſſings on each other's head, as God has promiſed to our charitable prayers.

This is the foundation of ſocial or public worſhip: the aſſembling together in God's name is a duty which we owe to ourſelves and our brother. It is a mark of our brotherly love,

love, and God hath promiſed particular ſucceſs to our united petitions. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," ſaith Chriſt, "there will I be in the midſt of "them," to aſſiſt and bleſs them.

Now that we might not be left to our own vague notions in a thing ſo eſſential as the praiſe and worſhip of our Creator, he hath been graciouſly pleaſed to ſet apart a particular portion of time for that, and for the more certain improvement of our ſouls, by praiſe, meditation and prayer.

A weekly ſabbath, or one day in ſeven, is the period which God hath reſerved for himſelf and his ſervice. It is therefore to be employed in his worſhip, and in the improvement of our ſouls by meditation, and by an enquiry into our ſtate and condition reſpecting God. The ſabbath therefore hath a particular relation to the ſervice of God here, and to our happineſs hereafter. And ſurely, if a ſmall portion of this our tranſitory life, properly ſpent, and extending its effects into

the reſt of our time, will ſecure us in the favour of God, and prepare us for endleſs happineſs, we cannot be too careful of the manner in which we employ it. It becomes the earneſt of our eternal reſt with God, and fits us for the converſation of angels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect.

There is a practice reſpecting God, which poſſibly at firſt might have had a pious origin, though now it be grown to the heighth of licentiouſneſs, and even blaſphemy. This is the uſe of God's name in common converſation. Perhaps the cuſtom might have begun from a deſire of expreſſing the man's dependence on God, and his confidence in his aſſiſtance, or his own veracity in affirming a matter of importance: but it has long been abuſed, and long been the mark of petulance, careleſſneſs, profaneneſs, atheiſm; and God's name, which ſhould never be pronounced but to bleſs or to be adored, is now in every inſtance uttered to blaſpheme our Maker, or invoked to curſe our brother and ourſelves. This cuſtom is ſo barren of profit

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or ſatisfaction, has ſo little to recommend it in any point of view, and in the very ſound of the words is ſo horridly ſhocking, that it will confound the moſt curious enquirer to find out a plea for it, as it is now exerciſed. And doth this vile, this impious practice particularly prevail among you, who, unknown to yourſelves, are perhaps as ſerious and well-inclined an order of men as the ſtate contains? You are not deliberately profane and blaſphemous: you would ſhudder at the ſuppoſition of your defying or affronting your God or your Saviour; and yet you moſt certainly do this in an extreme degree, when you wantonly ſport with God's name in common diſcourſe, and on every ſilly occaſion beg him to damn you and your comrades to hell for ever. This is the language of devils, not of men, and muſt be avoided if you deſire to fear God, or expect to gain his favour.

I am well aware you will plead habit for the crime; and I am ſure that no man will

finally be condemned at the judgment-ſeat of God, whoſe conſcience has not previouſly acknowledged the juſtice of the ſentence. Now I beſeech you conſider in time; will habit be an excuſe for evil conduct, if you never in the leaſt have ſtruggled to conquer it? If you have done your beſt to conquer the habit of common ſwearing, and ſtill continue to ſtrive againſt it, and yet fail of ſucceſs, I will, out of God's word, promiſe you, that God in mercy will find a way to ſave you through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt. But have a care how you attempt to impoſe a leſs degree of earneſtneſs than you are really capable of, or of caſting away your own ſouls for ever, rather than make an effort to free yourſelves from the moſt unprofitable and horrid of all ſins.

This is the ſum of what has been ſaid. Think of God as a wiſe lawgiver, as a benevolent parent: as ſuch reſign yourſelves freely to his diſpenſations; ſubmit yourſelves to his corrections, and ſearch out, in the errors of your

your lives, their deſign or purpoſe, that you may amend them, as knowing that every thing works together for good to thoſe that fear him. Inquire his will, that you may learn and fulfil it by tranſcribing it into your lives. Regulate your actions by his laws, revere him for his power, love him for his goodneſs. Think of him as being conſtantly preſent with you. In every action conſider how far you are likely to pleaſe him, whether the motives of your conduct will ſtand the teſt with him. By thus doing every thing as before God, you turn the moſt common acts of life, the buſineſs of your profeſſion, the ſerving of your country, into acts of religion: you ſecure God's favour and bleſſing on every thing you ſet about.

Avoid all profane ſwearing, all filthy or impious converſation. Honour God, in his name, his worſhip, his ſabbaths; draw near to him by prayer. Put your truſt in him, and pour out your heart in ſupplication before him. God will favour and bleſs you

here, and will beſtow immortal happineſs on you in heaven hereafter. To which happy ſtate may we all attain, through the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

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SERMON XI.

Duty to Ourselves.

Tit. ii. 12.

Denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.

IN explaining your connection with another life, and the duty ariſing from it, I have laid before you the worth and importance of your ſouls, by which alone you are capable of a future exiſtence; and I have conſidered that duty of reſignation and piety, which ariſes from the relation of a creature to its Creator. We come now to that duty which reſpects ourſelves, and ſhall conſider it as founded on the circumſtance of our

being framed capable of moral improvement, with a view to happineſs in heaven: for heaven is the purpoſe of our creation, and obedience the road to it.

Now as future happineſs is the purpoſe of our being, the improvement of our minds muſt ultimately reſpect that purpoſe. Therefore, in order to find out the things in which the perfection of our nature conſiſts, we muſt enquire into the qualifications by which we become fit inhabitants of heaven: and as every thing deſerving the name of perfection or improvement muſt relate to ſomething reſpecting our ſituation here, and proſpects hereafter, of which it is the perfection, it is clear that all advancement or merit muſt be ſought in the improved performance of the ſeveral branches of our duty. To explain this.

We are placed here as obſervers of, and enquirers into God's works. We are then to preſerve ourſelves in that ſtate of temperance and purity, which may enable us to diſcover his

his power and goodneſs, and may prepare us for receiving and enjoying their fruits thus held out to us by his bounty. By taking this care we ſhall be enabled to praiſe and honour him for every exertion of his Providence in our favour, and to imitate in our conduct to our brother his loving kindneſs to all his creatures.

We then improve or advance ourſelves, when we have contracted ſuch an acquaintance with the courſe of God's Providence, as raiſeth in us a reverence for his power, and gratitude for his goodneſs, to be expreſſed by a proper attention to our own conduct, by a habit of piety and reſignation towards God; and alſo (as we can make no other grateful return to God) by a friendly carriage to our brother, whom God hath appointed to receive in his ſtead thoſe acknowledgments which we owe to him for the benefits that we daily receive at his hands.

From this view of the neceſſary progreſs of our improvement, it appears how much the

the ſeveral branches of our duty ſtrengthen and aſſiſt each other, how naturally they riſe out of, and are reſolveable into each other.

Our duty to God, as his creatures, conſiſts in a reſignation to, and a compliance with his will, as being the gracious and wiſe diſpoſer of our fate; and in a reſpectful reverence and grateful praiſe, as being known only by his loving kindneſs and tender mercies. And a cultivation of the ſame reſigned temper and grateful ſentiments, doth alſo advance us in that proper frame of mind, which prepares us for the reception of happineſs in heaven, agreeable to God's gracious deſign in our creation.

Reſignation to God's will is indeed another name for prudence; for inſtead of being toſſed from one inconſiſtency to another, by paſſion or circumſtance, our conduct is regulated through it by divine wiſdom. Again, gratitude to God expreſſed in acts of reverence and praiſe to him, and of benevolence to our brother, is an active ſenſibility of what we have received, and of what is due from us in re-

return; and by making a conſtant progreſs in wiſdom and goodneſs, we ſhall approach as near as our frailty will allow to the perfection of our nature.

Further; Heaven, for which we are ultimately intended, is a place of purity and love. The happy inhabitants of heaven are more immediately in God's preſence, and their enjoyments particularly conſiſt in the contemplation of his perfections, and in the benevolent intercourſe of angels, and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. Heaven therefore muſt exclude every thing that is mean, ſelfiſh, impure: the drunkard, the profligate, the wanton, the miſer, the oppreſſor, the man of turbulence and ambition, the uncharitable, the cruel, would find nothing in heaven ſuited to their diſpoſitions; they would be miſerable in the midſt of bliſs, and with extatic happineſs ſurrounding them, would long for the indulgence of brutal appetites, and ſavage, ſolitary deſires. He therefore that properly proſecutes any particular branch of his duty, will be inſenſibly led to the performance of every

every other branch; and he that ſets his face heavenwards, will prepare himſelf by cultivating every heavenly virtue, correcting every vicious habit, and checking every vicious deſire incompatible with a pious, pure, benevolent diſpoſition of mind. Of this improvement, as of a duty reſpecting ourſelves, we mean to treat.

And now ſuppoſing heaven to be the place ultimately allotted for our habitation, that we bear a certain relation to God, who beſtows it, to fellow-ſaints and angels, with whom we are to poſſeſs it, to the particular employment in which that happineſs is to conſiſt, it follows indiſpenſably, that certain habits, certain diſpoſitions are neceſſary to prepare us for it. We muſt not claim admittance into the courts of the King of heaven, if we mean to inſult him by blaſpheming and abuſing his name on every trifling occaſion. We muſt not intrude upon a company of brothers, each ſeeking his own happineſs in making thoſe around him happy, when we contract our pitiful wiſhes and deſires

ſires within the narrow circle of our own wants, and only eſteem of things and men as they may be made inſtruments of our ſelfiſh indulgence. We muſt not demand to participate in the exalted enjoyments of contemplation, the pious raptures of gratitude, or generous feelings of benevolence, which in an extacy of bliſs carry us out of ourſelves, when the only ambition we feel is to ſwallow ſtrong drink, mix in the glutton's feaſt, or revel in the bought ſmiles of an harlot.

Nor is heaven, in any poſſible view, a place to be entered into at random. The qualifications which fit us for heaven, muſt have their foundation in the heart, and be drawn out into practice. Speculative opinions, be they ever ſo juſt, and creeds, be they ever ſo orthodox, will not effect the purpoſe, if they influence not our conduct. We muſt accuſtom ourſelves to ſubmit our will to God's diſpenſations, a reverence for his power, a love of his goodneſs muſt be habitual. Our heart muſt be tuned to vibrate to a brother's woe, to rejoice in his joy, to be happy

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in his happineſs. Sobriety, purity, muſt adorn our converſation. Our lives muſt repreſent the goodneſs and ſerenity of heaven, to prepare us for a reception there.

And to conſider the preſent life as a ſtate of preparation for another, is to give this its due value: for take the life of the moſt prudent, ſenſible man, and ſtrip it of its relation to futurity, and what worth remains in it? Spent in idle ſpeculation, vain conjecture, or uſeleſs accumulation, it vaniſhes like a morning dream, and delivers the poſſeſſor over to diſappointment and corruption. Suppoſe him employed in the buſy ſcenes of life, and that he has been generouſly and humanely employed; to paſs by the conſideration that the objects of his attention generally turn out to be unworthy and ungrateful, the good that he does is fleeting, as are the objects of his benevolence, and lies buried with him in the grave. To be tranſitory, and to want value are equivalent terms; for what worth can that poſſeſs, which, with its conſequences, paſſeth away as a ſhadow? On the other hand,

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the ſmalleſt circumſtance that reſpects eternity is of importance: it grows in its eſtimation, and partakes of the infinite nature of what it ſtands related to: and hence all the ſilly devotees of pleaſure, are deſirous of taking ſhelter under the horrors of annihilation. Conſcious of having no pretenſions to the inheritance of the juſt, of having no faculties, no habits prediſpoſed for the generous refined happineſs of heaven, they ſee only terror in futurity, and would fain get rid of it at the expence of their exiſtence.

But is this a wiſh that unbiaſſed nature favours, or deſires to entertain? Shudders ſhe not at the very thought, ſtrives ſhe not eagerly to ſhut it out and avoid it? To be reduced to nothing, to be caſt out of God's creation as if we never had been, is a ſuppoſition that all but a guilty imagination, to which hell is the only alternative, muſt ſhrink at. And of this the horrid hope is cut off by every train of reaſoning that takes God's juſtice, and the courſe of his Providence into account. He, who by his own perfections

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and his will declared to man, has obliged himſelf to advance and reward the virtuous, is from theſe conſiderations equally obliged to puniſh evil doers: and though the manner in which he means to proceed be hid in his counſels, yet we may certainly conclude, that the ſinner with whom God reckons, will have no cauſe to boaſt of his bargain.

If then the favour of God be worthy of being gained, and heaven be worthy of being poſſeſſed; if our own happineſs, our eternal happineſs be an object of our ambition or our care, our improvement in knowledge and virtue is in the higheſt degree important: for every thing neceſſary to make exiſtence a bleſſing depends on our advancement in theſe. But things are beſt explained by their oppoſites.

Suppoſe then the man who caſts virtue and improvement behind him, to abandon himſelf to his luſts, to be the ſlave of violent paſſions, what valuable quality doth he poſſeſs, what has he that we wiſh to imitate? He

He ſtudies not God's works, that he may find out and adore his goodneſs; he mixes not with his brother's woe, that he may know how to aſſiſt and relieve him; he is unacquainted with the joys that temperance and purity reflect; he plunges headlong into every folly; he debaſeth himſelf with impurity, he is immerſed in brutiſh ſenſuality. In this buſtle of paſſion his Creator is not only neglected but affronted; perhaps his name wantonly bandied about in horrid oaths and imprecations. His neighbour, whom he ſhould love as himſelf, whom he ſhould anticipate in every office of humanity, is conſidered only as he can be made an inſtrument to carry on his mean ſelfiſh deſires. The niceſt feelings, the deareſt happineſs, the fondeſt proſpect of his brother's life, are wantonly ſacrificed to the moſt trifling indulgence of his paſſion, his inſolence, his oppreſſive cruelty.

Set againſt him the good man, who is diligent in making his calling and his election ſure. Every appearance of nature ſuggeſts to him the power and goodneſs of God;

every particular diſpenſation of Providence draws him near to his Creator in humility and reſignation; every bleſſing beſtowed on himſelf reminds him of his brother's wants, and he is anxious till he can expreſs his gratitude to God by relieving them. To give this turn to his gratitude, and ſtrengthen the habit, he ſtudies his relation to his neighbour, and finds a thouſand ties that bind them in one intereſt. They are of the ſame ſtock: they have one Father, even God, and one Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, and are intended for the ſame eternity of happineſs in heaven. In doing his brother good he makes himſelf happy, and pleaſes their common Father, who made them for each other.

In all actions that terminate in himſelf, he conſiders what he owes to his character, what to his expectations as a candidate for heaven, and is careful of doing nothing unworthy of that high dignity, that important proſpect. Temperance and chaſtity preſide over all his enjoyments; nor will he ſuffer the fleeting pleaſures of ſenſe to make him, for one moment,

ment, forget what he owes to his immortal part. His perſonal gratifications never come in the way, or hurt the feelings, the character, or happineſs of his brother. He knows not the loathings of ſenſuality, nor the remorſe of debauchery. His thoughts are raiſed to the happineſs laid up in ſtore for him, and nothing on this ſide the grave has allurements to tempt him from his duty. He enjoys peace and contentment within, and he ſpreads chearfulneſs and ſmiles around him.

In ſhort, while the one is debaſing himſelf by impurity, and counteracting every gracious deſign of his Maker towards him, while he is rendering himſelf unworthy and incapable of the happineſs laid up for him, the other is improving himſelf, and advancing in virtue and holineſs. He exalts his nature, and is employed in raiſing it by degrees to an equality with angels; and his God, who is pleaſed with the ſtruggle, will raiſe him to a communion with angels, and make him partake of their happineſs. His own conſcience

ſpeaks peace to him. God, in his word, proclaims his approbation. In this life he commands the eſteem and love of his people. In death the angel of the Lord ſtands ready to receive him, and conduct him to bliſs.

In theſe deſcriptions I have inſenſibly comprehended what I meant to have ſaid on ſelf-improvement. And my brethren, doth not the difference in point of eſtimation, between the ſlave of paſſion, and the candidate for heaven, forcibly ſtrike you? Do you not abhor the one? Do you not pant after the other? We have aſcribed no quality to the good man, that may not find a place in the meaneſt perſon who hears me. A good life may be the ornament, and God's favour the portion of the loweſt of the ſons of Adam. Each man here may riſe to be the favourite of the King of heaven. He requires not abilities; he thinks not highly of learning: he looks only for ſincerity in the diſcharge of our duty to our Creator, our brother, ourſelves, and our country. He who doth his beſt,

beſt, be that beſt ever ſo little, is moſt favourably accepted of by him.

What then need I add, but that we all endeavour to do the will of our Father which is in heaven, by improving ourſelves in virtue, and in the knowledge of God's power and goodneſs, that we may enable God to bleſs us, and make us happy? If we be willing to be taught, and to walk in the way of God's commandments, God's grace will ever be near to ſupport, and ſtrengthen our weakneſs: he will enable us to run the race that is ſet before us; nor ſhall our frailties diſappoint his good intentions towards us. For while he reſiſteth the proud and the preſumptuous, he giveth grace freely to the humble and the meek. This is to perform the will of our Father which is in heaven, that we may enter into his heavenly kingdom: which may God of his infinite goodneſs grant, through the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

SERMON XII.

Duty to our Neighbour.

Matth. xix. 19.

Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.—

THERE is nothing more evident in the whole of God's dealing with man, than a regular deſign of proportioning his enjoyments to his induſtry. By induſtry we extend our capacity for enjoyment, and God's goodneſs is ready to ſupply us with the means, even to an infinite degree. Heaven, which is the perfection of happineſs, is propoſed to us for our reward, on condition that we do God's will; which ſuppoſeth a diligent atten-

tion to every branch of our duty, and a ſincere ſtriving after perfection, in every valuable quality adapted to our nature, or riſing out of our conſtitution. We have already endeavoured to impreſs you with a ſenſe of the importance of this happineſs, from a conſideration of the nature of our ſouls, by which we apprehend it. We have conſidered the duty which ariſes from our relation to God, as the creatures of his goodneſs, and to ourſelves as moral, improveable beings. We come now to treat of that duty, which reſpects our brother.

Now we all are members joined together, and making one body in ſociety. We muſt therefore have ſome common bond of union, and that bond muſt reſpect equally and mutually the advantage of each individual. The laws or rules of ſociety muſt for this reaſon be founded, firſt on impartiality, forbidding all injury and hurt to each other, as oppoſite to, and deſtructive of, the very origin of ſociety, or general benefit.

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But from ſociety we reap every advantage and conveniency of life which we enjoy. An individual is an helpleſs being: before he grows up, he owes more to his friends and parents than he can ever poſſibly repay them. He has no other method of returning this debt or obligation, than by doing the ſame good offices to thoſe who are to come after him. An individual could not poſſibly ſupply himſelf from his own labour, but by the good will of others, with the leaſt article or conveniency of life. We are therefore bound not only to do our neighbour no injury, but further to do him every good office in our power, as a debt or act of juſtice due for the ſervice and kindneſs received, and the benefits derived from his ſociety.

Again, we are all the children of the ſame God, and are all meant for the ſame joint grand purpoſe, the attainment of happineſs by the road of virtue. Subſervient to this purpoſe, he hath given us a conſtitution adapted for ſociety, and for drawing equally our improvement, and our preſent happineſs from

from mutual aſſiſtance and ſupport. We then anſwer one great purpoſe of our creation, the perſuit of our preſent happineſs, when we love our brother.

Further, God hath intended us all equally for happineſs in heaven, a place of harmony and love; and he hath appointed this love and good will to our neighbour here, as the mark or proof of our being worthy of that exalted bleſſed ſtate. If then we wiſh to have an inheritance in heaven, we muſt cultivate a benevolent, charitable diſpoſition to mankind; becauſe, unleſs we poſſeſs ſuch a diſpoſition, the gate of heaven will ſhut of its own accord againſt us.

Laſt of all, God hath appropriated extreme miſery, even hell-torments to the man, who can neglect, ill-treat, oppreſs, or uncharitably uſe his neighbour. All our happineſs ſuppoſeth communication or ſociety. But he who is capable of behaving ill to, or injuring his brother, is a ſelfiſh ſolitary being, and diſturbs and counteracts God's gracious purpoſes

poſes with his creatures. His parental regard therefore, for the general good, for thoſe who render themſelves worthy of his care, obligeth him to ſet up this dreadful bar againſt the deſtructive wickedneſs of the ſinner; and the ſame motive, and the love of juſtice, eſſential to his perfect nature, require that the judgment be duly executed.

If we, therefore, have any feelings, or regard for ourſelves, and our own happineſs, our neighbour's welfare will not be indifferent to us. Hence every poſſible tie binds us to regard, and do our brother good. The laws of ſociety ſuppoſe an impartial, benevolent diſpoſition. The obligations ariſing from it, require it of us. Our natural biaſs to ſociety, prepares us for it. By cultivating a brotherly love, we prepare ourſelves for happineſs in heaven, and we avoid the puniſhments of malice and hatred.

But without uſing any reaſoning, without indulging any reflection, we have a natural propenſity in favour of our brother. Brotherly

therly love is ſo neceſſary for carrying on the gracious purpoſes of providence, that God would not leave the effects or fruits of it to ſlow reaſoning, or caſual reflection. He interwove a benevolence of diſpoſition with our inmoſt frame, and made ſentiment echo to a brother's feelings. To do good to our brother, requires us only to give free ſcope to the workings of our heart. They carry us ſtrait to him; they grudge no expence or trouble that will do him ſervice.

How often do we find in private life, the ſelfiſh reaſoner embarraſſed, while he caſts about for an excuſe to extricate himſelf from a benevolent engagement, into which his natural humanity has unthinkingly hurried him, before ſelf could find time to put in her claim. Benevolence, therefore, is the natural habit of the ſoul; it gives form and worth to every other quality, and finds no check or enemy in our conſtitution, but a blind ſelfiſhneſs, which under the aſſumed name of prudence, always ſuggeſts the preference of ſelf to our neighbour, the indulgence of ſome

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mean appetite, or indolent habit to his peace, of our preſent feeling to that future happineſs, which is indiſſolubly bound up with charity and love. In ſhort, the making of benevolence an object of merit with God, requires only that we regard his approbation, when we reſign ourſelves to its feelings.

And this leads us to the conſideration of the extent of brotherly love. Brotherly love, whenever it acts, ſuppoſeth ſome labour, ſome expence, or ſacrifice of ſomething valuable to do our brother good. Therefore in benefiting our neighbour, a compariſon may be ſuppoſed to paſs in our minds, between the good office to be done to him, and the expence or trouble which it muſt coſt us. Now, as we alſo owe a duty to ourſelves, and it may happen, that this ſhall ſeemingly be oppoſed to that duty which we owe our brother, ſome rule is neceſſary to determine our conduct. And this is given us in the following Chriſtian precept, "Whatſoever ye would that "men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo "unto them: for this is the law and the pro-"phets."

"phets." Or, ſuppoſe yourſelves in your neighbour's ſituation, of want, diſtreſs, or danger; and on the ſame liberal plan, on which you would determine your own relief, do you determine for your neighbour's good.

Add to this, that all the good things of life, all our power and ability to do good, ariſe from ſociety, or are freely lent us by God, to enable us to be a bleſſing in our neighbourhood; not to be appropriated to ourſelves, but to be ſhared with our neighbours. We have therefore no more an excluſive right to the benefits ariſing from the uſe of our own powers, and the enjoyment of our own wealth, than a ſteward has to the proviſions entruſted to his care for the uſe of the family. The power or means of doing good, is a charge committed to us. And though in executing this charge, it be not expected that we ſhould treat ourſelves niggardly, any more than our neighbours; yet we muſt not think to confine our powers and poſſeſſions to the indulgence of our own perſonal feelings and deſires. We are to conſider ourſelves as brethren, having

having one common intereſt, and intended for one common happineſs. And brotherly love is then properly ſhewn, when the power of doing good, entruſted to a man's care, reſpects himſelf and his brethren equally.

And in this conſiſts the particular merit of charity, as it makes an important branch of the Chriſtian religion. The diſpoſition to charity muſt be in the heart; but the deeds of charity can only be occaſional, as objects and opportunities preſent themſelves. And as every act of charity is a voluntary ſubmiſſion to ſome trouble, or a waving of ſome perſonal indulgence to ſerve our neighbour; hence it contracts a degree of merit before God, which our Saviour aſſures us, he will not fail to reward. The abſence of every other virtue ſuppoſeth the oppoſite vice preſent. He who doth not love, and fear God, hates and neglects him: he who is not ſober, is profligate or debauched. To fear God, and to be ſober, can therefore hardly be ſaid to ſuppoſe merit; ſeeing the want of theſe virtues makes the man highly criminal before

God, and even leſſens him and makes him loathſome in his own eyes.

Now charity, acting only occaſionally, and at the expence of the time, feelings, or ſomething valuable belonging to the man, ſhews him to be capable of going out of himſelf, and riſing above the conſideration of his own immediate intereſt, in order to obey God and ſerve his brother. And ſo well pleaſed is God with this ſelf-denying diſpoſition of mind, that our Saviour aſſures us, we ſhall be judged at the laſt day, by the progreſs which we ſhall be found to have made in it. Enter into my kingdom ſaith Chriſt, not becauſe you have worſhipped God and led ſober lives, (though none will be allowed to enter that holy place, but ſuch men as have lived in the fear of God, and in the practice of temperance,) but enter into my kingdom, becauſe you have fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, viſited the ſick and the priſoner, entertained the ſtranger. Here then Chriſt, who beſt knew the worth of charity, (for it drew him down from heaven

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to recover ruined man) gives a clear preference to charity, though he excludes not other virtues. Charity renders us fit to be numbered among the happy inhabitants of heaven, and therefore heaven is propoſed to us as the reward of charity. Remark then, my brethren, how ſtrongly the chain is drawn between us and our neighbour. Our private happineſs, and our good will to him, are ſo cloſely connected, as not to be ſeparated; they riſe and fall together.

Do you deſire to know how this God-like quality of benevolence or love is to be exerted? Baniſh the little ſuggeſtions of ſelfiſhneſs, and conſult and follow your own feelings, under the direction of God's laws. Thus inſtructed, thus turned to ſympathy, when your brother is in need, in diſtreſs, in danger, in errour, you will run to extricate, and ſuccour him. The hazard, the trouble, the expence, will not draw your attention; and were they of much greater conſequence than common circumſtances ſhew them to be, yet God, who has commanded the hazard and

duty, can out of his ſtore richly repay the coſt. Behave to all about you with openneſs and good will; overlook peculiarities, be blind to failings; be not moved with, catch not fire at, peeviſh humours. It is the property of love to bear with infirmities, to find excuſes for neglects and inattention. Senſible of our own wants, we learn to explain away our neighbour's defects.

If our brother at one time fails in ſhewing a regard for us, at another opportunity his behaviour will make ample amends, when perhaps it may be of more conſequence to us. On this account we ſhould not haſtily break with our brother for every ſlight or fancied injury, but allow him to interpret one part of his behaviour by another. If he perſeveres in ill-nature, and in giving offence, ſhun him, and guard againſt him as againſt a robber: but furniſh him not with an excuſe for his ill-conduct by your reſentment or retaliation. Men always cenſure more highly an improper revenge, than the original injury.

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One of the greateſt crimes that we can commit againſt our neighbour, is the leading him into ſin, or countenancing him in evil courſes. It deceives under the maſk of friendſhip, and impoſes in the form of good-will, and a ſocial diſpoſition: we ſhould therefore avoid the appearance of it and firſt approaches to it, as a thing deſtructive to both parties; and in this view we muſt avoid all wanton, profligate company of either ſex, becauſe all ſuch, inſtead of helping forward, as good Chriſtians, each other's ſalvation, only promote and haſten each other's ruin.

Particular relations in life require particular attention. Parents claim our reverence and grateful love; children our care and inſtruction: ſuperiours demand obedience and reſpect; inferiours are to be treated with condeſcenſion and kindneſs; ſervants with good-will. Equals and companions expect eaſe, affability, mutual forbearance and aſſiſtance: the poor claim relief; the ignorant information: in ſhort, every ſituation in life, every condition reminds us of the golden rule of

doing as we would be done by, and preſcribes the energy, and extent of the duty. And as the right performance of our duty to every one in their ſeveral relations, gives us a claim on every perſon in return, for the right performance of their duty to us, or if they prove deficient, a reliance on God's goodneſs, and veracity for a ſuperiour reward; the prudence of complying with it is as evident as the juſtice.

And what reaſonable excuſe can we have for not loving our brother, for not doing him every good office in our power, when we cannot poſſibly make ourſelves happy but by contributing to his happineſs? To be malicious, ſpiteful, and deſigning, to lead or accompany men into debauchery and ſin, is to have the diſpoſition of the devil; a diſpoſition which conducts us ſtreight to hell. To be meanly ſelfiſh, fraudulent, deceitful, pinching, uncharitable, is at once to ſhut heaven's gate on our own happineſs; for it conſiſts in harmony, and the exerciſe of all the benevolent affections.

In our caſe, my brethren, ſhut up as we are together, and ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, and hourly owing our enjoyments and ſecurity to each other's labour and attention, a watching for, and catching at each other's faults, would almoſt without a figure realize the ſtate of the damned, and muſt infallibly prepare us for their puniſhment.

Let us then, in loving our brother, do the will of our Father which is in heaven, that we may inherit his kingdom, the ſeat of harmony and love. Let us be kindly affectioned to each other, in honour preferring one another, ſeeking our own happineſs, and the favour of our common Father, in the happineſs and intereſts of our brother.

And may that good God whoſe loving-kindneſs firſt formed us, and formed us to be happy in each other, after a life of peace and good-will ſpent here, bring us all to that happineſs, which is prepared for us with ſaints and angels in heaven, by the ſufferings of his only Son, our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

DUTY TO OUR COUNTRY.

1 JOHN iii. 16.

We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

MAN, as a being dependent on his Creator, and meant to fill a particular ſtation in the world, and among his fellows, muſt have the whole of his conduct preſcribed to him, and be reſtrained within a certain courſe of action. He who is engaged in a journey that requires expedition and care, can make no indifferent movement: every ſtep taken by him muſt either advance or hinder his purpoſe, muſt mark his diſcretion, or proclaim his folly. Now

our God intended us all ultimately for happineſs with himſelf in heaven; and he hath promiſed to open wide the gate to us, if we will perſevere in doing his will. Heaven then is the country to which we are bound; and every particular thought, word, and action muſt reſpect it, muſt have an influence on our future lot, and affect the purpoſes of our being.

We have, in a former diſcourſe, explained what is meant by doing God's will, and have ſhewn it to conſiſt in the being reſigned to the diſpenſations of his providence, in honouring his name, his word, his worſhip, adoring him for his mercies, applying in prayer for his grace, particularly regarding, and carefully performing every branch of our duty, becauſe he hath enjoined it. We have ſhewn, that God expects us to conſider ourſelves as candidates for heaven, and to prepare ourſelves for it by a life of ſobriety, temperance and purity, by cultivating all the benevolent affections, by ſubduing whatever is ſenſual, ſelfiſh, malicious, or impure.

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Here then is no room for any arbitrary or indifferent conduct, becauſe every imagination of our heart, every word that paſſes our lips, every action of our lives, every acquired habit muſt reſpect our God, our neighbour, or ourſelves, and therefore muſt influence our future happineſs. A God of perfection can be author of nothing arbitrary or indifferent in its nature. Truth is ſaid to be the work of his hands: but truth muſt have a purpoſe or deſign worthy of divine wiſdom, and excluding all chance or accident. The ſcope of this reaſoning will appear in the following diſcourſe.

My brethren, we are here aſſembled to carry on the ſervice of our country: our country contains our parents, our families, our relations, our friends, our neighbours; in general, all that part of mankind with whom we can have any immediate connexion, or who can be influenced by our conduct. I make this diſtinction in oppoſition to thoſe modern-refined ſpirits, who are for overleaping the narrow boundary of country and people,

people, and under the affected title of citizens of the world, pretend to graſp at univerſal benevolence; I ſay, pretend to univerſal benevolence, becauſe theſe men not unfrequently purſue this phantom, by aiming at the deſtruction of that particular community of which they are members, and within a ſmall part of which their proper ſphere of activity muſt, in moſt caſes, be confined; and becauſe it will generally be found, that thoſe who feel not for their family and country, with which God and nature have connected them, while they conſtantly talk of embracing all mankind, are either mad enthuſiaſts, or deſigning ambitious men, without having one ſpark of real charity or benevolence to boaſt of.

Now to us our country has committed the protection of her laws, the vindication of her rights, on which depend the proſperity of our friends, our families and people; and at our right hand, and from our exertion, will ſhe require them. The performance of our duty to our country can never therefore be conſidered as an arbitrary or indifferent thing, while

while we owe a duty to ourſelves or our neighbour; for it affects our faith, it influences our affections. For, ſuppoſe that we neglect our duty to our country, that we deſert her ſervice, that we betray her to the enemy; can we do this, and pretend to love our neighbour, indulge the benevolent affections, or obey the laws of God? It is plain, that we muſt give up all claim to theſe duties; and it is plain, that in giving up our claim to them, we abandon our pretenſions to heaven, which is held forth to us as their reward. Therefore to perform our duty to our country, is to do the will of God; and when performed in obedience to his will, it equally, with the other branches of our duty, entitles us through the merits of our Redeemer, to enter into the kingdom of God. Let this then, my brethren, be ſtrongly imprinted on your minds, that when you do your duty to the public, you do God's will; and when you conſcientiouſly perform it, as to him, you are in the fair way to heaven and happineſs.

In thus repeatedly reminding you of your duty to your country, I am far from thinking you deficient in the performance of it. Would God that all her ſervants ſerved her with as much ſimplicity and good-will, as you have ever done: you have grudged no labour, no hazard, no danger of your perſons to promote her intereſts; and the glory of having contributed to it, has too often been all the reward that your honeſt hearts have reaped from the atchievement. My wiſh is to exalt your motives, and while you have a right to expect a return from your country for your painful labours, I would fain accuſtom you to look up to God's will, as the foundation of your obedience and duty, and to his faithful promiſes for the reward of your performance of it; a reward which will be proportioned, not to the value of your ſervice, but to his own power and goodneſs.

Your country may overlook, or not be able to reward your labours fully; but God in a thouſand ways, even in this life, can, and will make up, in her ſtead, for the faithful diſcharge

charge of duty done in compliance with his will: he can give you favour with your officers, he can bleſs you with health, he can ſave you in danger, he can proſper you in your affairs. And ſhould any thing be wanting here, the ſtate is tranſitory and ſhort, and the joys of futurity ſtand ready to make good its defects; and he who has entered into them, forgets all former diſappointments and ſufferings. It is therefore of great importance that you be made to look up to God as the author of your duty to your country, and the faithful rewarder of the ſincere diſcharge of it: it will double the natural ardour of your minds, will make you look up to a recompence, which neither the inability, caprice, or injuſtice of man can deprive you of: it will fill you with a ſenſe of your own importance, and carry you on to a ſtrictneſs and dignity of character, worthy of God, who is the author of it; worthy of heaven, with which it will be rewarded.

Now, in order to give your ſervice of your country theſe happy conſequences, you muſt con-

conſider God as commanding it, and obedience to him as your end or purpoſe. You muſt not decline her ſervice, when ſhe calls on or needs you: you muſt not deſert her cauſe, nor murmur at your duty. You muſt be diligent in acquiring every quality that will enable you to advance her intereſt; ſkill in your profeſſion; a ready and perſevering obedience to your officers; a ſobriety and temperance that will always keep in your power an ability to execute their orders.

Theſe things ariſe out of the very nature of your duty to your country; or rather, that duty conſiſts in the execution of theſe things. And the oppoſite conduct is not only ſinful before God, but alſo highly imprudent, and ruinous reſpecting yourſelves. For ſuppoſe a ſeaman to be guilty of mutiny, deſertion, diſobedience, drunkenneſs; the very end or purpoſe of his ſervice is loſt both to himſelf and his country. To his country he is uſeleſs, perhaps hurtful; in himſelf he is expoſed to puniſhment, to degradation, to diſeaſe, as

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may clearly be collected by conſidering them ſeparately.

A deſerter loſes all courage and confidence in himſelf; he ſteals from one lurking-place to another, afraid of meeting with any former acquaintance; he induſtriouſly avoids his friend, who might adviſe or aſſiſt him; he caſts away the wages for which he laboured; he abandons the promotion for which he ſerved; he hath put it out of his country's power to ſupport, or offer him a retreat in his old age: if diſcovered and brought back, he becomes liable to that capital puniſhment, which the law ſo juſtly inflicts on him who deſerts his poſt: if he eſcapes diſcovery, he becomes the prey of ſome deſigning kidnapper, who ſells him to a ſtranger, who works him beyond his ſtrength, defrauds him of his wages, and then turns him adrift, perhaps while labouring under ſome mortal diſeaſe, and unable to help himſelf.

While the deſerter thus throws himſelf in the way of want, puniſhment, diſeaſe, ruin, the

the man who perſeveres in chearfully ſerving his country, finds his duty eaſy, and his proſpect pleaſant: he is when ſick carefully tended; when become infirm and old, he is tenderly nurſed: he riſes in the ſervice, and acquires conſideration and property in it: he finds a friend in every acquaintance; his own conſcience approves of his conduct, and his God ſtands ready to reward him for it.

The man who is of a mutinous diſpoſition, is abhorred and ſhunned by every body around him: he ſuſpects every order, as a trap laid for his particular eaſe and quiet: every thing that befals him, is a ſubject of murmuring and diſcontent: he draws in the innocent and unwary near him, and unfeelingly betrays them to remorſe and puniſhment. While he makes the ſervice go thus heavily on, and is a curſe to every one connected with him, in himſelf he is miſerable, extracting diſquiet and wretchedneſs from the moſt indifferent circumſtance. As ſoon as the ſuſpicion of his officers is awakened, and the tendency of his conduct obſerved, all his actions are

watched, and ſeverely animadverted on. He is conſidered as the author of every oppoſition to command, and is made anſwerable for it, till at length ſome enormous crime at once demands the forfeit of his life.

Set againſt him, the man who is chearful and diligent in his duty: he acquires the love and regard of his officers; he riſes inſenſibly in the ſervice; he receives aſſiſtance; he meets with indulgence from every perſon near him; he carefully huſbands the wages which he has earned, and looks forward with confidence to the retreat prepared by his country, for the years wherein he may be unable to help himſelf.

The careleſs, the lazy wretch (I cannot call him ſeaman, for *he* is active and briſk; this man has another, a familiar expreſſive name) who has neither application or ambition, to acquire ſkill in his profeſſion; of neceſſity has placed himſelf as the very loweſt of his rank, and has appropriated to himſelf the baſeſt and meaneſt offices, together with the con-

tempt, reproach, and buffetings of all his comrades around him. While he ſees every one of the ſame ſtanding with himſelf raiſing themſelves above him, attracting the notice of their officers, and filling places of credit and profit; he drudges meanly on, without honour to himſelf, without advantage to his country.

Drunkenneſs in a ſeaman, is a compoſition of whatever is baſe, hazardous, or hurtful. The drunkard can pretend to no ſkill, becauſe in his drunken fits he is incapable of carrying on even the ſimpleſt part of his duty. He is a deſerter, for he abandons his poſt. He is guilty of mutiny, for he diſobeys orders. He is unfaithful and falſe in his truſt, for he receives wages for ſervice that he does not perform. He not unfrequently proves a moſt injurious enemy to his country, by ſetting the ſhip on fire, and in thus depriving her of a noble floating fortreſs againſt her enemies; he by the ſame action robs himſelf and his fellows of their lives, and his country of their ſervice. Drunkenneſs, therefore, is

the greateſt crime that a ſeaman in his country's ſervice can poſſibly commit; for it naturally produces every crime, and is accompanied with every fault that can hurt, or hinder his ſervice. To the man himſelf it is the parent of vice, of danger, of puniſhment, of diſeaſe. He who is guilty of it loſes the confidence of his officers, and the regard of his companions. He cannot riſe in the ſervice, diſcipline calls aloud for puniſhment, and want, nakedneſs, and diſeaſe follow cloſe at the heels of his folly.

On the other hand, the ſober man is ever ready for the execution of his duty. He is the man whom his officer delights to truſt; to whom he gives opportunities of diſtinguiſhing himſelf, and whom he is ever ready to befriend and promote. While the drunkard is raiſing the diſguſt and contempt of every one that comes near him, he gains the love, he commands the eſteem of his companions; and his ready aſſiſtance, when they are in danger, ſecures in his turn, their protection and help. The vigour acquired by tempe-

rance, gives him a facility in performing his labour, and a clear head to plan and contrive it: though ready to brave danger when the ſervice calls, he carefully avoids it when it can do no good; and by preſerving his health, and attending to his perſonal ſafety, he keeps himſelf conſtantly in a ſtate fit to ſerve his country and himſelf.

Here then we ſee that God hath hedged about our duty to our country by natural puniſhments, ſufficiently ſevere to enforce our performance of it. We can never offend againſt it, but we offend againſt our own eaſe, our own character, our own happineſs. For we cannot be falſe to our country, or negligent of her ſervice, without drawing in conſequence, evil and ruin on our own head. And theſe things, this ruin which we have mentioned, as the natural effects of mutiny, deſertion, diſobedience, neglect, drunkenneſs, follow immediately on the perpetration of the crime or folly; nor can they be more eaſily ſeparated from each other, than the ſhadow from the body that forms it.

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But it is the habit or diſpoſition of the mind with which things are done, that God principally regards. This is the circumſtance that makes us accountable creatures, and that determines us for a ſtate of happineſs or miſery in another life. Now we have ſhewn, that we cannot fail in doing our duty to our country; murmur at or diſobey orders; deſert or negligently perform her ſervice, or make ourſelves by drunkenneſs incapable of it, without failing in the performance of our duty to our neighbour; without deſpiſing or neglecting our own improvement; without indulging the malevolent affections, and thereby rendering ourſelves unfit for, and unworthy of happineſs in heaven; and finally, without becoming obnoxious to the wrath of that God who hath commanded the duty.

The neglect therefore of our duty to the public, or our unworthy behaviour in it, is a complicated crime, and an accumulated miſchief, whether we reſpect our preſent or our future ſtate. Prudence therefore conſpires with religion; preſent feelings with future

expectations, in recommending a hearty diligent perſeverence in the ſervice of our country. You ſee it is no indifferent thing to be taken up or let go at your liking, unconnected with virtue, not influencing happineſs. God hath commanded it as a branch of ſelf-improvement, as a comprehenſive part of our duty to our brother, as the exerciſe of all the benevolent affections, as promoting that charitable frame of mind which alone can fit us for happineſs in heaven. What then remains, but that we ſtrenuouſly perſevere in ſerving our country, and look up with confidence to heaven for our reward, in protection here, in happineſs hereafter, through the merits and mediation of his only Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

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SERMON XIV.

Of Man's Duty as laid down in the Gospel.

1 Cor. vi. 20.

Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's.

IN explaining what is enjoined us, when we are commanded to do the will of our Father which is in heaven, that we may inherit happineſs in the kingdom of heaven, I have endeavoured to impreſs you with a due ſenſe of the importance and neceſſity of this happineſs, by bringing you acquainted with the worth and laſting exiſtence of your ſouls,

by which alone you can apprehend, by which alone you can enjoy this bleſſed ſtate. A being made for eternity, capable of an endleſs advancement in knowledge, in merit, and capacity of happineſs, and for whom Chriſt could ſubmit to die, muſt indeed be valuable, and every thing that concerns it of the greateſt weight.

I have explained to you what expreſſions of duty, immediately reſpecting himſelf, God expects from you; reſignation to the diſpenſations of his providence, an humble carriage before him, a dependence and truſt on his goodneſs, expreſſed by prayer and thankſgiving, a reverence for his name, his word, his worſhip, carefully ſhunning all common ſwearing, blaſphemy and impious converſation.

I have endeavoured to make you acquainted with the extent of your duty to your neighbours; ſhewing you that it precludes all fraud, injuſtice, cruelty, oppreſſion, ill-nature; that it requires of you ſtrict juſtice, good

offices, kindneſs, inſtructions, the exerciſe of all the benevolent affections, relief, aſſiſtance, and ſympathy in diſtreſs; in ſhort, that you are to conſider your neighbour as a brother, who has a common intereſt, a common duty, and common proſpects with you.

I have conſidered this duty to your neighbour, not only as a thing that a regard for right obliged you to perform, which the laws of God, the equal God, and Creator of you and your neighbour, enjoined you indiſpenſably, but alſo as a neceſſary qualification to render you worthy of happineſs in heaven; becauſe happineſs there will chiefly conſiſt in the exerciſe of all the benevolent affections.

I have conſidered this duty to your neighbour particularly as influencing your conduct in the public ſervice, and have convinced you that this is a very important part of it; and that equally with every other branch of our duty, it has God for its author and rewarder. In doing this, I tried to awaken your ambition by directing you to look up

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to God as marking your conduct, and by obſerving that what he commanded, and meant to reward, could not be indifferent in the execution, or little in the conſequences of it. In aiming at this, I meant to ſet you above all murmuring, diſcontent, deſertion, neglect, diſobedience, drunkenneſs, as things immediately in themſelves ruinous, deſtructive of every ſober proſpect, and demonſtrative of ſuch a malevolent worthleſs diſpoſition, as without repentance and amendment, muſt render the poſſeſſor abſolutely unworthy of future happineſs.

I have marked that duty of purity and temperance which you owe to yourſelves. I have called on you to conſider yourſelves as candidates for heaven, as beings that ſhould be above the ſlavery of appetite, as men whoſe time ſhould be employed in the acquiſition of knowledge and wiſdom, in the cultivation of all the friendly benevolent affections, that your minds may be prepared for, and aſſimulated to the employment, the company, and the joys of heaven, before you are ſummoned

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to take poſſeſſion of your inheritance. I have warned you againſt purſuing the indulgence of bodily appetites merely for their gratification, becauſe it checks every juſt, every magnanimous thought by which we apprehend virtue, and aſpire after its reward.

This, my brethren, is a duty that extends to every poſſible thought, word, and action. No circumſtance is ſo trifling, no retirement is ſo private, but in ſome manner or other affects it, either checks or forwards it, and thus either injures or promotes our future happineſs. And though no particular act of duty be beyond our ability, yet certain it is, that when we examine our own hearts, and enquire out the practice of mankind, we muſt conclude, that there is not one to be found among the ſons of Adam, who perfectly complies with every part.

And as every failure in our duty muſt be accompanied with ſome correſponding evil biaſs in our minds, it is plain, that beſides the natural puniſhments which neceſſarily

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and immediately follow every breach of our duty, there muſt alſo be comprehended in them a criminality before God, that renders us in a proportioned degree unworthy of happineſs in heaven, and obnoxious to future puniſhment. God is merciful, but he is alſo holy, and will never permit iniquity to inhabit his high and holy hill: for this would be to ſet aſide his own laws, and to diſpenſe with that progreſſive perfection for which he formed his rational creatures.

How then are God's mercy and his holineſs to be reconciled? Or how is man, who is only capable of a partial obedience, to be rendered worthy of heaven, into which nothing impure or ſinful can poſſibly enter? The univerſal condemnation of mankind to puniſhment in hell, in the very thought carries horror and deſpair, and ſeems to ſhut out all exerciſe of infinite goodneſs. On the other hand, it contradicts every notion that we can entertain of God's majeſty and holineſs, and of the pure enjoyments of heaven, to ſuppoſe that God can take into his boſom, and advance

vance to his kingdom, the debaſed, unrepenting ſenſualiſt, the malicious brother, or the blaſphemer who dies in his ſins, contradicting and oppoſing with his might all God's gracious intentions reſpecting him.

Divine goodneſs alone could extricate us out of this difficulty; infinite mercy alone could invent a method of reconciling human weakneſs with heavenly holineſs. When man had loſt all ſenſe of his own wants, and of his dependance on his Creator; when he had become ſo ignorant of the purpoſe of his being, as to be inſenſible of his relation to another life; when he was neither encouraged by the hopes, nor alarmed by the fears of futurity, to act the part for which God intended him; in ſhort, when loſt to every rational purpoſe, he lay a helpleſs victim under God's wrath, his Creator determined to recover him to reaſon, to virtue, to heaven, by a ſtupenduous act of condeſcenſion, which ſhould ſecure among men every poſſible degree of virtue and perfection, and thereby open a new door to happineſs, and vindicate

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before men and angels his mercy equally with his love of holineſs and juſtice.

In proſecution of this plan, the Son of God came down from heaven, to declare the good-will of his Father to mankind, and to reconcile them to their happineſs and their duty. With this view Chriſt condeſcended to live among men, and taught them, both by his example and his precepts, how to regain God's favour, and how to fulfil his will in a manner that ſhould be accepted by him. By the miniſtry of Chriſt God originally made the world; by his miniſtry alone, could it then be properly redeemed: and that we might know that this redemption was no unmeaning ceremony on his part, he ſurrendered up his life on the croſs to ſave us. By our creation we became the immediate ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom, bound by his laws, ſubject to his authority; for God conſtituted him the head of the creation. But by his death he purchaſed us with a price, and we are the redeemed of his love, if we caſt not his ſalvation from us. Well might St. John ſay,

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" Herein is love, not that we loved God, but " that he loved us, and ſent his Son to deliver " and ſave us from our ſins, and from the " puniſhment due to them."

Now, the conditions of this new covenant made between us and God, through the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, are, that ſenſible of our own weakneſs and inability to pleaſe God, we ſhould repent ſincerely of our ſins, look up to Chriſt's interceſſion for pardon, and apply to his grace for ſtrength to fulfil his laws. God, in conſideration of Chriſt's humiliation and death in our ſtead, hath given our ſouls to him, and hath changed the original condition of perfect obedience, into a ſincere, perſevering endeavour after obedience, joined with faith in Chriſt Jeſus. We are to do our beſt to pleaſe God, and obey his laws; for God will not accept a leſs degree of obedience than we are really capable of; and we are to receive Jeſus Chriſt for our Mediator and Redeemer, in whoſe name, and for whoſe ſake, all our ſins will be forgiven, never to be remembered againſt us. This is

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the compoſition, or covenant made between divine holineſs and human weakneſs.

By this method the greateſt poſſible degree of virtue is preſerved in the world; for ſincerity, and an earneſt ſtriving after perfection is required of every man, who wiſhes or expects to profit by Chriſt's death. And as ſincerity is in the power of every man, even the weakeſt, the dulleſt, the moſt ignorant; no man is excepted in the call of Chriſt's goſpel, no man needs to come ſhort of the ſalvation offered in it. The goſpel, while it holds out enquiries and perfections to the moſt improved, and ſtudious among the learned, humbles itſelf to the ſimplicity of the peaſant, and adapts its precepts to the apprehenſion and ſlowneſs, of the meaneſt and the loweſt. In it there is no previous condition of abilities or knowledge: it requires only of us, that we be ſenſible of our ſins, and of our need of a Saviour. The more ſenſible you are of your own weakneſs, the leſs confident of your own powers; the more ready you will be to flee to him, who is mighty to ſave, who

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invites all, who refuſes none, who rejoices to find the loſt ſheep, and welcome the wanderer home. There is no hazard to be run here, no room to doubt while God is true, if you only apply ſincerely for ſalvation.

And with what thankfulneſs ſhould we be animated, when we meditate on God's love to man expreſſed in the humiliation and death of our Saviour. Reflect on the ſcene of our Saviour's ſufferings. Repreſent before your mind the agony which He endured, when weighed down with the whole burden of our ſins in his paſſion in the garden; follow him to Golgotha, inſulted, mocked, abuſed by the people whom he had fed, inſtructed, healed. See him nailed to the croſs in the midſt of thieves, racked and tortured beyond the bearing of humanity. Hear him exclaim at the dreadful withdrawing of that divine countenance, without whoſe ſmile creation would be a blank. Hear him in his agony, praying for his enemies; ſee him reſign his breath. Obſerve the ſavage ſoldier pierce his heart, while the lifeleſs body hangs ſuſpended on the croſs. Mark the intereſting circumſtances,

and tell me if you feel not your ſouls filled with grief, with wonder, gratitude and love. Chriſt ſuffered all this for you, when you were enemies to him, when you were outcaſts from God and virtue. Hence let me again beſeech you, brethren, to learn and know the value of your ſouls, and how much they deſerve your care, ſince the redemption of them from ſin and miſery brought down the Son of God from heaven to live a life of poverty, contempt, reproach, and die a death of ſhame and pain. Can you refuſe to ſo diſintereſted a benefactor any return that is within your power? And in the name of all that is rational, what is the return that Chriſt expects from us for all his loving kindneſs, and tender mercies? To follow virtue, that God may be enabled to bleſs and make us happy by our virtue. And ſhall we diſappoint him in his gracious intentions towards us? Or, if we did, what would it be, but to embrace miſery and wed deſpair, to caſt our happineſs and being from us, as unworthy of our care.

To embrace the ſalvation offered to us by Chriſt, requireth a firm perſuaſion of God's unbounded

unbounded goodneſs, manifeſted to us in the humiliation and death of his Son, and that we conform our lives to the terms or precepts of the goſpel. And what is there in this, to which a wiſe or prudent man will object? God is holy, our duty is comprehenſive; and we are frail weak creatures, apt to fail in the performance of our duty. We may with tolerable certainty conclude, that it ſhall be well with them that obey God; but what, not derived from revelation, can we with confidence affirm of them, who are conſtantly ſinning againſt, conſtantly offending God, throughout the courſe of their lives; often without thinking of the neceſſity of repentance, generally without attempting a reformation? Shall we unfeelingly aſſign them over to ruin, or ſhall we open heaven's gates, and introduce into God's preſence, men cloathed with, perhaps boaſting of their ſins? If there be abſurdity in the one, and cruelty in the other ſuppoſition, why object to a mode that reconciles juſtice with mercy? Why quarrel with our own ſalvation, becauſe we cannot fathom God's goodneſs; becauſe we cannot

penetrate into the hidden things of his providence, to account for his wonderful love in ſending his Son to die for us? Yet he, who out of a mere act of his goodneſs created us at firſt to make us happy, may be allowed to be deſirous of recovering us to virtue, and to the purpoſe of being the creatures of his love. And, if our Saviour condeſcends to become the willing inſtrument of his kindneſs, we have only farther cauſe to bleſs God, and thankfully embrace the offered ſalvation.

We know, that without Chriſt we cannot help ourſelves, but that through his grace, and in his merits, we are equal to our duty; for ſincerity and a willing mind are all that he requires, and they are within our power. If we apprehend him by faith, believing in God's word, and forming our practice agreeable to that belief; if we cleave to him, ſtriving to direct our lives by his goſpel, he will perfect ſtrength in our weakneſs, he will make up our defects, and preſent us pure before his Father, worthy of the inheritance which he hath purchaſed for us.

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Let us then, my brethren, reflect ſeriouſly on our ſins, and on our weakneſs; let us flee to the God whom we have offended, and deprecate his wrath by prayer and repentance: let us embrace his loving-kindneſs manifeſted in Chriſt Jeſus; let us firmly truſt on him, and regulate our conduct by his laws; let a ſenſe of what he hath done and ſuffered for us, fill us with love and gratitude in return; and let us form this grateful attachment to a gracious Saviour, into an additional guard againſt our falling into ſin and folly. We can only diſappoint God, we can only affront and grieve our Saviour, when we refuſe or deſpiſe the mercy and happineſs which they hold out to us for our acceptance: let us then fear God, and love him; let us reverence his name, and ſubmit ourſelves to his providence; let us chearfully cloſe in with his gracious purpoſe of ſalvation revealed in the goſpel of his Son, and ſhew our gratitude for it, by ſubmitting ourſelves to his law of kindneſs; let us be conſtantly going on towards perfection, by ſubduing every inordinate luſt, by acquiring all uſeful knowledge, by cultivat-

ing every generous affection; let us love our brother, let us rejoice to do him good; let us behave with honesty and diligence in our several stations, in our country's service. And may the God of peace, after a life of diligence and virtue passed here, bring you to that rest, which he hath prepared for them that love him in Jesus Christ. Amen.

FINIS.